SERMONS

BY THE

Rev. Robt. Fairweather.

Memorial Sermons.

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Rev. Robert Fairweather, M.A.

MEMORIAL SERMONS

OF THE LATE

REV. ROBT. FAIRWEATHER, M.A.,

MINISTER OF THE PARISH OF NIGG.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

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PREFACE.

IN issuing these Sermons in compliance with the request of many parishioners and friends, as a Memorial of the late Minister of Nigg, the family have to apologise to the Subscribers for the delay, as also for the omission of the Funeral Sermon, preached by the Rev. James Cooper, Minister of the East Church, Aberdeen, on 17th August, 1890, which he had kindly promised, but by some accident or other he could not find. Another sermon of the deceased has been added in place thereof, making the volume to contain eight sermons as at first intended.

ABERDEEN, *1st August, 1891.*

Biographical Notice.

THE Reverend Robert Fairweather was born in the City of Brechin on the 6th August, 1817 (where his grandfather, Rev. John Bisset, had been Minister for 28 years, and who died and was buried there in 1797). He was educated at the Parish and Grammar School of his native city, then taught by the Rev. George Alexander, and entered King's College in 1831, having obtained by competition the second bursary after a two day's contest. The first day Mr. Fairweather, the Rev. James Legg, LL.D., now Professor of Chinese in the Oxford University, and the late Rev. Symon Macintosh, D.D., Minister of the East Church, Aberdeen, were ties. When he graduated at the end of the session of 1835 he stood second in Latin and third in Greek. When at King's College he fought many a battle for the rights of the students, and at one time the Senatus thought of expelling him, for no bad conduct on his part, but merely fighting for what he thought his rights, and which is now accorded to every student. While a student of Divinity, and attending the Hall at Marischal College, he took a deep interest in the election of the Lord Rector, and on one occasion proposed Lord Brougham to that office, whom he successfully carried by the able speech he then gave when but a lad of nineteen.

By the majority of students Lord Brougham was looked upon as an infidel, and knowing this to be their opinion of him, he ended his speech with the climax—"Think you, that *I* would damp *my* prospects by proposing an infidel, while I have but the world for my home and *my* education as *mine only* patrimony."

He was licensed by the Presbytery of Brechin on 4th June, 1839, presented to the Scotch Church of Rotterdam on 5th July, 1839, and was elected Minister on 4th August, when he was ordained by the Presbytery of Brechin on 4th September of that year. He remained there for four years. In December, 1843, some six months after the Disruption, he was settled at Nigg as successor to Rev. Mr. Thom, whose assistant he had some time previously been asked to become. The expectation on the part of some, we believe, was that Mr. Fairweather's leanings were towards the Evangelical party, and that if he returned to Scotland he would join the Free Church. But, however that may be, he was settled as parish minister of Nigg at the date mentioned, and continued sole minister of the parish until three years ago, when, owing to failing health, he obtained as assistant and successor, the Rev. Hugh M. Smith. Mr. Fairweather, who was a man of an exceedingly genial and hearty disposition, was a fluent and effective preacher; and in addition was wont, so long as health and strength remained, to take a considerable share in the discussions in the Church Courts. In September, 1889, on the completion of the jubilee of his ministry, and as happened, the occurrence of his golden wedding,

he was presented with a complimentary address, accompanied by the gift of a timepiece for himself and Mrs. Fairweather. Upon that occasion, though far from being in robust health, he entered upon some interesting reminiscences of the earlier years of his early ministry, telling his audience, amongst other things, that two members of the Presbytery of Brechin who were present at his ordination were still alive, viz., Rev. James M'Cosh (now Dr. M'Cosh), Principal of Princetown College, and Rev. Dr. Nixon, formerly of Montrose; Dr. M'Cosh having, moreover, been also engaged as "best man" at his marriage, though called away by the death of his mother.

RELIGIOUS TRAINING.

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."—*Pro. xxii. 6.*

HE present has been, by way of eminence, termed the "Age of Reading." We dispute not the accuracy of this title, but we question much if it is the Age of Reflection. Numerous and varied facilities have been opened up for the spread of intellectual truth, the boundaries of the field of science have been widely extended. So many and so multiplied are the opportunities for acquiring information, that most culpably ignorant are they all who refuse to avail themselves of them. Rapid and great advances have been made in literature and science, philosophy, and the arts. Information in these various departments of knowledge has been so widely diffused through the masses of our population as to justify the appellation to our times of the title—"the age of reading." We rejoice and bless God, that the barriers of ignorance have been thus far levelled, and that all these facilities have been afforded for the diffusion of knowledge, and that many noble and philanthropic schemes are in operation for rendering that diffusion still greater. But we may be allowed to express our fears, we suspect too well grounded, that a proportionate progress has not been

made in that knowledge, which alone can make us wise unto salvation.

Many worship in the temple of science who worship not in the temple of God, many cultivate the mind who improve not the heart, many pry into the mysteries of nature who refuse to look into that mystery of Godliness—"God manifest in the flesh;" Many can thread the labyrinth of metaphysical subtleties who will not enter in at the strait gate and by the narrow way. Many can measure the distances and calculate the altitudes and describe the mighty courses of the planets, who will not contemplate the height and the depth, the breadth and the length of that love which passeth knowledge; many can trace the sources of a nation's wealth—the remedies for a nation's poverty—in the science of Political Economy, who will despise and reject that blessing which maketh rich, and with which there is added no sorrow. In a word:—Multitudes are wise for this world, but fools for the next; not ignorant for time, but miserably ignorant as regards eternity!

For, what avails it to a being destined for an immortal existence, that he can retain in his comprehensive grasp that knowledge which is bounded by earth and limited to time, if he is ignorant of that which reaches beyond the skies, which penetrate into the heaven of heavens. An immortal is to be trained for immortality, and on this training there is no other treatise save the gospel.

And this training, we boldly aver, is by many culpably neglected. No matter how great and praiseworthy the advances may be which we have made in what is termed, by way of eminence, "useful know-

ledge"—yet, true it is and of a verity, there is a general and most lamentable ignorance of the Scriptures of Eternal Truth, not merely amongst the rising generation, but amongst those advanced in life.

Whatever may have been the cause, whether it arose from the circumstances in which they were placed with reference to their church or the interests of religion—whether it had its origin in the prominence given to religious controversies, and the universal attention they excited. Whatever were the causes matters not, for certain it is, that in a later age there was a far more extensive, general, and profound acquaintance with the Bible and its doctrines than what characterizes the present times. And, let it not be forgotten, that the tone of morality then was more exalted, the reins of ecclesiastical discipline drawn tighter, the fences of the Sanctuary firmer and more stable, the attachment to Evangelical Truth less fickle and not characterized by a vapoury effervescence produced by a temporary agitation, or the excitement of a moment, the opposition to heresy and error then more resolute, indefatigable, and unbending. Imagine not that we are casting unjust reflections upon the present age, that we are making insinuations uncalled for and unfounded, for it must be obvious to the most careless and thoughtless amongst you, how little attention is paid to a study of the oracles of God in contrast with the activity and perseverance manifested in the pursuit of other and far inferior objects of knowledge. Many books, excellent in themselves, admirably adapted for attaining the purposes they were intended to serve, have been read and re-read,

carefully conned over, frequently and leisurely consulted. But has the Word of God met with the same attention? Will it be believed that there are professing Christians, aye, not a few —that there are fathers of families, aye, not a few—that there are mothers in Israel, aye, not a few—who have never read through the Bible. Is it credible that this—the oldest, the best book in the world—that this, the earliest history of the human race—that this, the only treatise which gives a true account of man's moral constitution, of his existence and prospects as a rational, responsible, and immortal being, should have attracted so little of our attention, occupied so few of our thoughts. There is many a parent who would feel ashamed if his child was found to be unacquainted with some well-known fact in general literature, or science, but no blush would mantle his forehead though he evinced ignorance of one or other of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel.

In the training of the rising generation, the Bible is the surest, the safest, the best Directory, and that system of moral and religious education in which its doctrines are kept in abeyance, its injunctions but partially observed, its precepts but slightly regarded, that system of moral and religious education is lamentably deficient, if not seriously injurious.

We have made these preliminary observations, as they are of necessity forced upon us, before we can evolve the meaning of our text —"Train up a child in the way he should go." And that "way" is nowhere to be discovered but in this Bible —that "way" can be pointed out by none but Him who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

Taking then the Word of God as "a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path," we now proceed to mark out the way in which children are to be trained up. And, undoubtedly, this is no other than the good old way of serious practical religion, the way which God in his Word has pointed out for us—the way which all the children of the Lord have trodden in every succeeding age—the way, and the only way in which we and ours can find rest unto our souls. But reducing this general statement to details, we remark—

1. In the first place, that children should be trained up in the way of piety and devotion towards God. This is the foundation of everything truly good. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom." The Psalmist, therefore, invites children to him with the promise of instructing them in it: "Come, ye children, hearken unto me and I will teach you the fear of the Lord." This fear influences the whole of practical religion. It is a fear which has its origin in love, they who love the Lord in sincerity and in truth, are afraid to offend Him,—like as an affectionate and dutiful child is scrupulously careful lest he should in any way provoke the displeasure or lose the favour of the parent whom he loves. The Psalmist tells us that the fear of the Lord consists in "keeping the tongue from evil, and the lips from speaking guile, in departing from evil and doing good, in seeking peace and pursuing it."

In principles of piety and devotion toward God, children should be strictly and zealously trained. Their minds should be early and deeply imbued with the fact that the eye of God is ever resting upon them, that He is cognizant of all their thoughts, and words, and

actions, that His name and all His attributes are holy, and that he cannot look on sin or sinners without abhorrence. And here let me warn you of a common and very serious mistake which is committed in the religious training of the young. There are parents who, perhaps on a Sabbath evening, are regular and painstaking in instructing their children in the truths of religion, who inculcate upon them the duty of fearing God, of paying a reverent homage to His name and perfections; but the influence of this instruction is often grievously weakened by the careless, indifferent, and irreverent manner in which they themselves use the name of God in their common and daily conversation. And it is a fact, obvious to all who have come in close contact with the youthful mind, how singularly alive it is to such an inconsistency as we have now marked out, and how apt it is from its native constitution to imbibe the seeds and the sentiments of evil.

Not only should the power and justice of God be displayed before them in all their magnificence and majesty, but His infinite mercy and love should be brought before them in the moving and attractive language of Scripture. He should be represented to them as not only the Greatest and the Wisest, but the Best of Beings: "as the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, abundant in goodness and in truth, keeping mercy for thousands, and forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." As you labour to consolidate, and temper, and increase that natural affection which subsists betwixt a child and a parent, so it should be the untiring aim of all your endeavours, under promised grace, to excite and feed that flame of

devotion and attachment which exists betwixt a Heavenly Father and a redeemed and adopted child. They should be led to look upon God as one who watches over them with more than a father's love, and with more than a mother's tenderness; as One who, in the days of His flesh, said: "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not." The encouraging promise should ever be kept in their view: "I love them who love Me, and they who seek Me early shall find Me."

Early should they be led to a Throne of Grace to pour out their infant praises and supplications to Him who "out of the mouths of babes and of sucklings hast ordained strength." It should be carefully and perseveringly pressed upon them that communion with God in prayer is the stimulating, strengthening nourishment of every renewed soul; that without such spiritual intercourse every good resolution must remain unfulfilled; every virtuous feeling and emotion must disappear; and every grace must languish, and decay, and die. And here, on this point, let me affectionately warn parents against a mistake in religious training as common as it is dangerous: and first, I remark there is an error, common to not a few, in inculcating on the minds of youth that prayer is a duty merely, and overlooking the other important and attractive feature that it is a privilege—a high and a holy privilege, surely, in being permitted to hold converse with the Unseen "I am that I am"; and second, I observe that there are parents who conceive that they have discharged their duty on this point, if they have taught their children to repeat accurately from memory the Lord's Prayer, or any other prayer selected from

some approved "Manual of Devotion," without ever reflecting or considering whether they understand or feel the truths which the words imply. They are contented with the effort of memory—one of the earliest and strongest faculties developed in the youthful mind—and consider not, or care not, whether the head is comprehending or the heart is impressed with the meaning which the words are intended to convey. By thus representing Prayer as a duty simply, and overlooking the fact that it is a privilege, and a privilege of an infinite value, the young are thus led to look upon it as an irksome and troublesome duty—to regard it as a compulsory and not a voluntary service; and by rendering it to their children a mere routine of words, without any intelligible response coming from the head or the heart, they are virtually defeating the gracious invitation and promise—"Ask and it shall be given you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you."

The training of our children in the way of piety and devotion towards God must be understood to be in close and inseparable connection with what we now add in the second place—that children are to be trained up in the way of Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This great and fundamental doctrine of our Holy Religion—that we have all sinned with Adam, and that in Adam we have all died—must be carefully, diligently inculcated and impressed upon the youthful heart. We must avail ourselves of every opportunity of convincing them that they are by nature corrupt and by practice wicked; "that they have been conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity." We must lead them to see that in every burst of passion—in every

fretful and peevish emotion—in every feeling of envy, and jealousy, and discontent—in every attempt at prevarication or concealment of the truth—in greedily grasping at everything likely to please and pamper their selfish desires —we must lead them to see that in all these developments of their natural disposition there is abundant evidence of the fundamental doctrine of Scripture, "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." And here allow me to observe that the grand and radical defect of all our systems of moral science lies in this—that the powers of the human mind, and the affections of the heart, are so represented and treated as if they possessed the same vigour and purity as they did on the joyous morning of man's existence, when God looked upon the works of his hands, and pronounced them all very good. Every system of moral and religious training which is not based upon this foundation, viz., the universality of human depravity, and the consequent impotency of human effort to remedy the evil; that system of education which overlooks that melancholy but irrefragable fact is erroneous in principle, and fraught with the most pernicious and ruinous effects. This humbling doctrine must be increasingly brought before the mind of our youth; for, before they can understand and appreciate the great scheme of redemption, before they can receive Christ in His offices of Prophet and Priest and King, they must have been previously acquainted with that state of sin and misery from which He came to deliver them. When convinced that through sin they are children of wrath, and exposed to the curse of God, we must direct them to Christ, as the only hiding-place from the storm, and the only

covert from the tempest; His being "the only name given under Heaven among men whereby we can be saved." We must by prayerful counsel, and by a holy example, depending upon the aids of the Spirit, lead and guide them unto Christ, so that through faith they may be made partakers of all the benefits of the Covenant of Grace. We must ever be keeping their thoughts and attention fixed upon their Saviour's life of sorrowing and suffering, and his death of agony and ignominy, so that their feelings of hatred toward every appearance of evil may be increased, and steadly increasing in power and intensity; and that their hearts may be filled more and more with a love to Him which no time and no circumstances can alter or abate, but which will be developing its strength and sincerity in their steadfastly "walking in all the Commandments of the Lord, blameless," and perfecting holiness in the fear of God; and for this purpose we must direct them to seek in close and closer prayer for the assistance of the Holy Spirit, who alone can sanctify them wholly, teaching them to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

We have now, as it were, erected some direction posts, to point out the "way" in which children should be trained to go, with reference to their duty to God; and we now proceed to consider how they are to be trained with reference to their duties to their fellowmen.

3. Children should be trained up in the way of obedience to their parents.

This is a command which God delivered from Mount Sinai, and to which he has annexed the promise of long life—a blessing earnestly desired by the young. Children are God's heritage, and to all parents He has delegated a certain authority to be exercised by them over their offspring, and to that authority children are to yield a willing and patient, a cheerful and faithful obedience. "Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour thy father and mother (which is the first Commandment with promise), that it may be well with thee, that thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." In the training of their children, parents must not be content with a partial obedience to their commands, but must urgently insist upon all their orders being regularly and exactly obtemperated. Parents should scrupulously guard against indulging their children in any direct and resolute opposition to their authority, whether in matters of great or small moment; remembering that a child left to the freedom of his own will—left to act according to his own impulses—brings his parents to shame, and himself to ruin; for with regard to subjection as well as affliction it is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth.

4. I remark, further, that children should be trained in the way of benevolence and kindness to all their fellow-creatures.

The distinguishing characteristic of real Christians is, as laid down by our Saviour, that they love one

another. "A new Commandment I give unto you: that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." The great Apostle of the Gentiles tells us that love is the fulfilling of the law, and that all these branches of it which relate to our fellow-men is comprehended in one word, *love*. This love, then, we should labour to inculcate upon our children with peculiar care. Selfishness is an affection prominently developed, even in the infant heart; and it should be our endeavour to moderate and keep under restraint such a feeling, by steadily and perseveringly keeping before the youthful mind the golden rule of conduct and of action—"Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you, do ye even so to them." In the dawn of existence, when the sensibilities have not been blunted by contact with a callous and unfeeling world, while the finer sympathies of humanity are not absorbed in self, while the heart is yet tender and its strings can vibrate to the notes of joy and sorrow; oh! embrace that opportunity of embuing them with feelings of affection and kindness to all their brethren of mankind. Let it ever be impressed upon their minds how dependent we all are upon each other as members of society, as children of the same family; and how unbecoming it is that they who are brethren should be living in hostility and strife and contention. Point them to the example of their Saviour, who went about continually doing good, ministering to the wants of the poor, relieving the distressed, comforting the afflicted, and consoling the sorrowful. Let it be your peculiar care to check every manifestation of a cruel

and revengeful feeling; encourage them in every act of benevolence; labour to excite the generous and sympathizing affections of their disposition, so that you may be privileged to see them through grace, rising up around you, the disciples of Jesus, and the friends of humanity.

5. I remark, further, that children should be trained up in the way of industry and integrity; idleness is the parent of many vices, as is amply and painfully attested by history and experience. Energy and activity are natural characteristics of youth, and therefore every prudent and religious parent will see that their children are diligently improving their time, and are steadily prosecuting these pursuits which are suitable to their age and station. Nothing is more disastrous to the temporal and eternal interests of anyone, than an indulging in idleness, or yielding to the suggestions of a fickle, wavering, and unsettled disposition. If there is one duty, as regards this world and its interests, more incumbent upon a Christian parent than another, it is that he should carefully prevent his children acquiring idle and lazy habits; for never is the Devil more ready to assail them with his temptations, than when they have nothing to do; for in doing nothing they are doing evil, for in order to kill the time which hangs so heavily upon their hands, they readily rush into every vicious indulgence; unfit themselves for the discharge of the duties of life; and ruin their prospects as regards eternity. Idleness, in a word, is destructive of both body and soul. If you wish to see your children settled respectably in the world, discharging the duties of their station with honour and advantage to themselves and their connec-

tions, oh! employ every means; spare no labour in training them early to habits of diligence and industry, remembering the words of King Solomon: "Seest thou a man diligent in his business—he shall stand beforekings—he shall not stand before mean men."

Children should be trained in principles of honesty and integrity. Ingenuousness ought ever to be the characteristic of youth. Parents should be careful to check every departure from truth and rectitude; should by reproof and correction show them how detestable are prevarication and deceit, and that lying lips are an abomination unto the Lord; inculcating upon them the scriptural declaration—"He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely; but he that perverteth his ways shall be known."

6. I remark, further, that children should be trained up in the way of humility and self-denial.

Humility is a grace most becoming the young; and parents should spare no effort in cherishing and nourishing this virtue in their offspring; they should carefully keep in abeyance that natural pride which was the first sin and the ruin of our nature, and which cleaves to every child of Adam with the tenacity of his original being. They should teach them to be respectful and reserved in the presence of their superiors; obliging and courteous to their equals; condescending and compassionate to their inferiors. In every attempt to oppress or tyrannize over those beneath them, they should be sharply and severely checked, lest, unreproved, the habit may so grow upon them that in after life they will be detested by all, for their unsufferable arrogance and pride.

Children should be early trained to habits of self-denial. In the season of youth, lusts and appetites, carnal affections and unholy passions, are, if we may so speak, in a nascent state—they are, as it were, in the bud, and have not developed the fruits which, if unchecked, they will do when subjected to the influences of the sun of pleasure, and the atmosphere of a world lying in wickedness. Their appetites and lusts can be more easily restrained in early life than when through time and experience to the influence of evil example, they have increased in growth and in strength. Parents, then, should labour to keep their desires within proper bounds; accustoming them to submit to denials and disappointments with contentment and cheerfulness, with firmness and with fortitude. By such wholesome restraint, they will, while under the paternal roof, be fitted and prepared for entering upon the duties and trials of active life, and enabled to bear up with becoming spirit when, in the providence of God, they are led to experience, as they will have to do on more occasions than one, the truth of the scriptural averment—"The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." In entering upon the world and in sustaining the character of disciples of the Lord Jesus, these words should be engraven on their hearts, as it were, with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond—"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself."

We have thus laid before you some of the leading principles of religious duty in which parents are to train their children. Those children God has given you, saying, as Pharoah's daughter said with respect to the infant Moses—"Take this child and nurse him

for me." A solemn and heavy responsibility is resting upon you; oh! see that you are alive to its importance, and that in strength of promised grace ye are labouring to train them up in the way they should go, and for your encouragement in such a work, attend to the declaration of my text—"And when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Is it not the uppermost desire in your heart, is it not the subject of your warmest prayers, that you may see your children growing up in grace and ripening for glory, beloved of God and respected by their fellow-men. Oh! then, improve the present season by instilling into their mind's the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. For if, through the aids of God's Spirit, you train them in the way they should go, take the word of the Lord for it, He will keep them as the apple of His eye: he will guide their steps in the slippery paths of youth: His hand will shield them from the barbed arrows of the destroyer; and when life's stormy struggles have come to a close, and when time has been swallowed up in eternity, you and they will meet at his right hand, where there is fulness of joy and where there are pleasures for evermore! But if you neglect to instruct them in the days of their youth, if you launch them on the world with no right principles to guide them, then rest assured that, if sovereign grace interfere not, certain misery and destruction is in their path; and, instead of finding in them a blessing, you will experience a curse—their conduct will embitter the remainder of your existence, and harrow your spirit in the agonies of death. A religious education is their sheet-anchor as they prosecute their voyage on the tempestuous sea of life—

unman not their frail barque upon the rapids which will bear it onward and downward till it sweeps them into the whirlpool of destruction and of death. Christian parents, you have much in your power, you know not what a vast amount of influence you have over the minds of your children. Exert it so as to promote their everlasting salvation. Now is their heart in this tender and soft and pliable state ready to receive good and lasting impressions—impressions which the toils and troubles of active life, the corroding cares of the world, or the blandishments of prosperity can never obliterate. For in every mind there are numberless associations connected with the parental roof. There are a thousand recollections of a father's love and of a mother's tenderness, which no time or no distance can dissipate or destroy. The fallow ground of their hearts is broken up. Oh! then, in this the spring-time of their days, sow the seed, which, when watered by the dews of the Spirit, and shone upon by the Sun of Righteousness, will bring forth many and precious fruits to the praise and the glory of Him who, in the days of his flesh, said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman." The recollection of parental solicitude to train us up in the way we should go often comes over our mind in after-life, with an absolutely crushing weight, and when we remember that the father and the mother who taught us to fear God and reverence his statutes are no more, we are compelled to give vent to our feelings in a flood of tenderness.

The following is an incident illustrative of this. A sailor was observed looking intently at something, and exclaiming, "I cannot stand that." And what, think

you, could not the sailor stand? He had stood the beatings of many a storm. Often had he mounted up to heaven, and gone down again into the depths. Many a time had his soul melted because of trouble; yet he has rode out the storms; trode the billowy deep boldly, and given his trouble to the winds; but now he meets something which he cannot stand. What is it? He can stand the perils of a lee-shore, he can bear being a night and a day in the deep, he can buffet the hardest gale that ever blew off the "Horn," he can do and endure more severe labours than any other man, but now he knocks under, and what is it that bears him down? It is the picture on the cover of a tract of a woman teaching a child. "Oh!" said he, "I cannot stand that. It reminds me of my dear mother. It is just the way she used to teach me, but she is gone," and he burst into tears.

Another incident most telling and touching, illustrative of the same, allow me to bring under your notice. A vessel was wrecked on the shore of a distant country, and among the bodies of the unfortunate crew which were washed by the tide on the beach was that of a young sailor boy, and when the strangers were to consign his remains to their last resting-place in a foreign land, far from the graves of his fathers, there was found lashed to his person, and close, close, next to his heart, the Bible which his widowed mother had given him with many a fervent prayer, and many a burning tear.

Mothers in Israel, much, very much depends upon you, under God, in forming and training the youthful mind. Oh! see that you are labouring with untiring assiduity to train up your children in the way they

should go, resting with fiducial trust upon the gracious assurance that when they are old they will not depart from it. Christian parents! many of you may not be able to leave your children honour or riches, but this you can leave them—the most valuable of all patrimonies, the best of all birth-rights—a religious education. And when laid upon a dying bed, with this world and its objects hastily receding from your view, it will cheer your spirit and gladden your heart at the prospect of leaving the children of your affections alone and unbefriended in this cold and inhospitable clime, that you have dedicated them to Him, and instructed them in His ways, who is a Father to the fatherless, the stranger's shield, and the orphan's stay.

My Young Friends,—Bear with me in again addressing to you a word of counsel and exhortation Attend diligently upon all the means of instruction with which God in his Providence has so abundantly blessed you. Pray frequently. Pray earnestly. Pray in faith for the Spirit to assist you in understanding the word of the Living God, which is able to make you wise unto salvation. Many are the snares and temptations awaiting you in a world lying in wickedness. Oh! be persuaded to flee youthful lusts and the society of those who are dissolute and profane, those who are indifferent and unconcerned about the things of eternity. Choose as your friends and companions those who have turned their faces toward Zion, and who are earnestly and perseveringly seeking for Jesus. Let the Bible be your rule of faith and the guide of your conduct; let the aspirations of your highest and loftiest ambition be to have your names written in the Lamb's Book of Life, with this memento appended: "A sinner saved by grace." AMEN.

THE RAINBOW ROUND ABOUT THE THRONE.

"And there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald."—*Rev. iv. 3.*

The Book of Revelation, so full of mystery and majesty, is calculated to arrest and engross our deepest and most earnest attention. The divine and glorious sights which John was privileged to behold, and of which he gives a grand and most graphic description in this sacred book which bears his name, are, though dazzling, yet delightful to the eye of our Faith. In the chapter from which our text is taken, we have an account of a striking and splendid vision with which John was favoured. He beholds a door opened in Heaven, and a voice like the sound of a trumpet breaks upon his ear, inviting him to come up into the new Jerusalem. Presently he is in the Spirit, and his eye rests on a throne set in Heaven, and he beholds one sitting on it apparelled in all the glittering brightness of the jasper together with all the bloody redness of the sardine stone, and around the throne on which this transcendently glorious Being was seated, he saw a rainbow in sight like unto an emerald. It is not of the throne, nor of Him who occupied it, that we are at present directly to discourse, but the subject of our contemplation and meditation is the rainbow which encircled the Lord of

Glory arrayed in all the majesty of His divine and human nature; the brightness of the jasper indicating the splendours of His Divinity; and the redness of the sardine the sufferings of His Humanity. With a vision similar to this which John beheld Ezekiel appears to have been favoured. In the first chapter of his Book of Prophecies, we have an account of it. "And above the firmament," says the Prophet, "was the likeness of a throne as the appearance of a sapphire stone, and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above it. And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward. I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the Bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about." Both the Prophet and the Apostle were privileged to behold the Rainbow that encircles Emmanuel's throne, and a sight more glorious to Jehovah, or more gladdening to mortals, can neither be imagined nor described.

Methinks (if I may venture to indulge such a supposition) were I transported like John to the upper sanctuary, were my spiritual vision so enlarged and so expanded and increased that I could gaze on its ineffable glories, I would have my eyes riveted on the rainbow which encircles the throne. I would overlook every object save the Lord of Glory, and the rainbow of brightness surrounding Him. My eyes would never wander from these. Neither the lustrous splendour of the throne, nor the four-and-

twenty Elders around it, clothed in their garments of brightness, and wearing their crowns of gold, neither the lightnings that are moving to and fro, not to scathe but to illumine, neither the thunderings that are bursting from the throne, nor the voices that sound like the murmuring of many waters—none of these could ever draw my admiring gaze from the rainbow all radiant with splendour. And if I should withdraw my eye it would be to look down to the foot of the throne, where, in the sea of glass with its crystalline waters, I would still behold the same lovely rainbow reflected in all its luminous brightness and dazzling beauty, and while I joined in the praises and prayers of the living creatures who are crying continually—"Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come," and while I bent in humility with the Elders who were casting their crowns at the foot of Emmanuel's throne, saying—"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." While engaged in these Heavenly exercises, my eye would ever linger on that resplendent rainbow which encompasses Jehovah's throne. And if you ask me why this fixedness of gaze? why this intensity of delight? my reply is, reflect for a moment on what would be the emotions of the Patriarch Noah, when he looked on the bow which God had set in the clouds as a pledge that the waters of the deluge would never again overwhelm the dwelling-place of man. Conceive for a moment what would be his feelings, and you have a key to all that is passing within my breast as I gaze on that rainbow which, emerald-like, surrounds the throne of the Highest.

Scarce had the smoke disappeared from the Patriarch's accepted sacrifice, when this luminous arch burst on his view; and as he beheld this pledge of a covenanting God, I can imagine His feelings embodied in these words—Never again shall the curse of Jehovah rest on this ground; never more shall the windows of Heaven be opened to desolate and to deluge this nether world; the disastrous wave shall not again sweep over the mountain-top; nor the forest trees dip their towering heads into the rising billow; the ark of gopherwood shall not again be unloosed from her moorings; no more voyages to Ararat; no more perilous passages over a dark and roaring flood; never again shall I have to send the raven or the dove to tell that the waters are abating. Oh! no. That bow which is stretched o'er that vaulted roof tells me, with all the energy and might of eternal truth, that while the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease. So in like manner as with the eye of faith, I gaze on that rainbow which is around the throne above, I have a pledge that the waters of wrath shall never be outpoured on the head of a repentant sinner, that his immortal spirit shall not be overwhelmed in the floods of everlasting indignation, that over it shall never brood the tempest-tossed clouds, nor the mists of darkness. I gaze on it, and I am enraptured as I gaze, for it tells me that the dimness and dreariness of my prospects here shall ever be illumined by its brightness, and that its emerald colour shall be transparent through the shadows of sorrow that are drooping over the path of my pilgrimage, and that against the overflowing vengeance attendant on a broken law,

it should be my impregnable bulwark, my undoubted security. And, oh! how great and how glorious was the privilege of the Exile of Patmos, who had the loneliness and solitude of his ocean-isle cheered and enlivened by a sight so surprising, and so surpassing, and so seraphic.

Last Lord's day we discoursed to you of Heaven as enjoyed by the blessed immortals. We wish now to speak of it as it relates to the peace and the prospects of those who are yet sojourners amid the tabernacles below. "The rainbow that is round about the throne" indicates that gracious covenant which subsists betwixt a pardoning God and a penitent and believing people. It has a reference not to them who have been removed from this transitory scene, and who are now inhabitants of that celestial city, over which the darkness of night never foregathers, but it has a correct reference to us who are struggling amid the toils and the trials and the troubles of this sinful and sorrowing scene. It is the blessed token to the Redeemed of the Lord that their Saviour and King keeps in perpetual remembrance the immutable covenant which He made, when amid the ruins of the fall, He uttered the soul-rejoicing words—"That the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent."

The figure employed in our text to indicate this covenant, is taken from that pledge which God gave to Noah of the inviolability of his promise—"That the waters should never again become a flood to destroy all flesh." And it is to the analogy betwixt the two rainbows that we would now for a little solicit your attention, and may Sovereign Grace assist me in describing, and you in understanding.

1. And in the first place we observe that there is an analogy betwixt them in their properties.

The rainbow is never seen but when the sun shines, and in direct opposition to him; and is formed by the refraction of his rays on a watery cloud: nor can the sun form such a refraction if he is above 42 degrees higher than the horizon, as then his refraction is lower than the earth. We stop not here to consider the question that has been started, whether there were rainbows previous to the deluge, or to test the reasonings of those philosophers who have argued that, from the nature of clouds, it must have been seen previous to the event. We think all this unnecessary, and that it partakes of philosophic trifling, as Scripture neither asserts nor denies the existence of such a natural phenomenon previous to the deluge, but simply states that God pointed to it as a pledge of His never again visiting this earth with a similar judgment. He chose it out of the vast storehouse of nature, and made it a sign of His mercy and forbearance, giving it an intelligible meaning unto His people. We learn then, from naturalists, that the rainbow is occasioned by the refraction and reflection of the rays of the sun on the drops of falling rain, and here we can trace an analogy, alike obvious and striking, betwixt it and that all-glorious one which encircles Jehovah's throne. It is formed by the rays of the Sun of Righteousness as they are refracted and reflected through the dews of divine Grace as they are dropping on those who have been made partakers of the Covenant of Grace. There is the sun to melt and warm, by his genial influences, a soul bound in the icy embrace of spiritual death; and there is the former and the latter rain

descending to refresh and quicken, and strengthen its reviving energies and resuscitated powers, and all this metaphor or analogy finds a reality and substance in the Covenant of Grace. Such a representation as is embodied in the words of our text—"A rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald," conveys to my mind a vivid description of the nature and properties of that covenant which the Almighty so graciously communicated to our Foederal Head after he had plunged Himself, and His posterity into everlasting wretchedness and woe.

It is to the sun, physically speaking, that we are indebted for the rainbow as a promise that there will never again be a deluge, and in like manner it is owing to Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, that we can behold this Covenant of Grace, and realize the blessed and gracious promises contained in it. The first Adam had broken one covenant, and could not personally be a party to the other. He quenched that light which had illumined the beauties of Paradise, and drew over the moral firmament a veil of darkness and gloom. The second Adam fulfilled the conditions of that covenant which the first had failed to perform, withdrew the sable curtain which hung over the moral world, and high above He placed that rainbow which John beheld, to tell that the covenant had received an all-perfect obedience, and that for those who believed in Him, there was no more wrath, and no longer any looking for of judgment.

Another characteristic of the rainbow is, that though the arch be high in the Heaven, yet the extremities reach unto the earth. If you look out upon this beautiful object of nature, you will perceive

the bow in the cloud with the ends of it sloping down to the earth. This is emblematical of the Covenant of Grace; its head is in Heaven, yet it encompasseth the earth. No matter what part we occupy, still it points towards us, as it were wooing us to come within its wide and extensive embrace. He that stretched His bow over that vast firmament, and who is the Author of the Covenant of Grace, is standing with out-stretched hands, inviting and entreating all to come and partake of its inestimable benefits. "He that believeth on Me shall never perish, but shall have everlasting life." "The Spirit and the Bride say come, and let him that heareth say come; let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him come and take the water of life freely."

Another property of the rainbow is its extent. It stretches from one end of the Heaven to the other. And in like manner the rainbow which John beheld, is immeasurably extensive, for it surrounds the throne of infinity. The Covenant of Grace is large and wide enough to take in the whole of Adam's race. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." There is room for all, for the very chief of sinners. None that cometh to Christ in sincerity and in truth will be rejected. It was a covenant made not for Adam only, but for all his believing posterity; it reaches from Adam to the last of his line, and all who will can realize its promises and enjoy its privileges.

We see then an analogy betwixt the two rainbows in their nature and their properties. We have traced a similarity in their formation, in their connection

betwixt Heaven and earth, and in their extent. And we would now, in the (2) second place, call your attention to the analogy that exists betwixt them as regards the circumstances of their appointment.

They are both of God's making. He set His bow in the cloud as a token of His covenant with Noah, and He has placed the rainbow which John beheld around His throne of mercy and of truth, to indicate His Covenant of Grace made on behalf of His Church. The circumstances under which they were appointed are analogous. The bow that is stretched across these Heavens, was characterized as a token of mercy and forbearance after the earth had been desolated by a flood of water, and the bow that spans the highest Heavens has the pledge of the removal of the curse of an offended God, a curse which had blighted every object connected with humanity. The one was a promise that the floods of water would never overwhelm the tabernacles of men, the other was a pledge that the deluge of wrath would never be out-poured upon a penitent and believing soul. Both these covenants were made at the will and pleasure of God, they were both spontaneous acts of His own all-merciful and infinitely benevolent mind. It was amid ruin and devastation that these striking monuments were given to the truth, that man's extremity is God's opportunity. The one was announced over the desolations of the tempest and the ravages of the deluge. It was as he stood upon the ungenial crust of a hardened soil with the adjuncts of humanity shattered from around him, and nought to look on save wreck and ruin, it was amid circumstances so disheartening, distressing, and despondding, that Noah heard the voice of God saying—"I do set

My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth, and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh, and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh."

It was when the garden of the Lord had become a waste howling wilderness; when the loveliness of Eden was transmuted into the lonesomeness of a desert; when its lovely and limpid and life-giving fountains had been exchanged for the dim and dark waters of Marah—it was when weary amid the ruins of all that was lovely in innocence, of all that was noble in a being once bearing the impress of divinity, it was when the clouds of vengeance had mustered in terrible array, and when the lightnings with which they were charged were to burst upon earth's guilty lord; it was when man stood helpless and hopeless and callous beneath the frown of his offended Maker, it was when the arm of Heaven's justice was outstretched red with vengeance, it was when the sword of the Almighty was to descend on man's guilty head, that Adam beheld the rainbow that is around the throne, and that his ear was greeted with the voice of Him who was to satisfy eternal justice, saying,—"Save from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom."

It was when Noah had left the ark, and when he gazed on the devastations the waters have made, that he hastened with feelings of love and gratitude to Him who had so mercifully preserved him and his family to rear an altar, and to offer up sacrifices to his great and bountiful Benefactor, and it was as the smoke from the Sacrifice ascended to the throne of the

Eternal, perfumed with the rich incense of a glowing and vital faith, it was then, we are told, that the Lord, smelling a sweet savour, said in His heart—"I will not again curse the ground for man's sake, neither will I again smite any more everything living as I have done." And so in the same manner it was that God, foreseeing and foreknowing the far richer and infinitely more acceptable Sacrifice—which Noah's great anti-type was to offer on the brow of Mount Calvary when He was to bow His head and give up the ghost—it was that God, in His atoning death, smelt a sweeter savour, and encompassed His throne with that all-glorious rainbow which the Prophet Ezekiel and the Exile of Patmos beheld in vision to remind His Church—"That it is indeed a FAITHFUL saying that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

3. But, in the third place, we proceed to consider the analogy which subsists betwixt the objects for which they were instituted. The bow in the clouds serves as a security that the earth will never again be submerged beneath the waters of the deluge. I look to that bow which spans yon vaulted firmament, and in its appearance I have a never-failing evidence that He who promised is faithful, that He is indeed a God who cannot lie. I see in it a better and a mightier security by far against the inroads of the deep than the sandy beach, where the strength of the billow breaks, or the beetling crag which is kissed by the spray of the foaming surge. The rainbow that surrounds the throne of Emmanuel is a pledge to the Church in all ages, that the enemy shall never come in as a flood upon those who have taken refuge in Him,

"Who is a hiding-place from the storm, and a covert from the tempest." The announcement that the Apostle makes in the text—"And there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald," tells me, that the Covenant of Grace, founded and sealed with the blood of the Lamb, is a glorious security (for all who flee to it by faith) against the deluge of devouring wrath, which will one day burst in all its fury upon every worker of iniquity. It tells me that they who are resting on the Rock of Ages are safe and secure when the flood-gates of Heaven's indignation are opened, and the waters of wrath rush forward with their fearful impetuousity and tremendous violence to destroy those who scorned to comply with the gracious invitation—"Come then, and all thy house into the ark." That glorious rainbow tells me of mercy procured; of grace obtained; of sin pardoned; of the devil vanquished; and of death destroyed; and my heart is so overjoyed and overpowered with all it reveals, that I am lost in astonishment aud admiration, and give vent to my feelings in no other words than these—"O the height and the depth, the breadth and the length of the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, for it passeth knowledge."

So far the analogy betwixt the two rainbows holds, but here it must end. The bow that appears in the firmament above us, and which cheered and comforted the heart of the Patriarch Noah, is destined to disappear for ever; when this earth shall have melted with fervent heat. When all that is mortal amid this transitory scene shall have been swept into its primeval nothingness; when that bow shall have dropped from that azure vault; when these Heavens shall have been

wrapt together as a scroll every trace of that bow, luminous, and lovely as it is, shall have for ever evanished, buried amid the ashes of nature's funeral pile.

But that rainbow which encircles the throne of the invisible is immutable as Jehovah, and imperishable as Eternity. This fact is indicated by the expression of the Apostle—"In sight like unto an emerald." This gem is of a green colour, and represents the freshness of youth, and indicates the absence of decay. In a word, comparing the rainbow to an emerald shows the perpetuity of the Covenant of Grace, and that covenant must be immutable, seeing it has been ratified and sealed by Him who "is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Oh! then I gaze on that rainbow with increased rapture, for in time, and throughout eternity, it is an imperishable monument of my Father's mercy and my Saviour's love, and I prostrate myself at a throne of grace, and give vent to my feelings in these words—"Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgressions of the remnant of Thy heritage; who retaineth not Thine anger for ever, because Thou delightest in mercy. Thou turnest again, and hast compassion upon us. Thou subduest our iniquities, and Thou castest all our sins into the depths of the sea. Thou performest the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham which Thou hast sworn unto our Fathers from the days of old."

In conclusion, let me ask what influence have the truths we have been considering on your minds. Do you not know that God has covenanted to save you, and that Christ has faithfully fulfilled every condition

of the covenant, and is anxiously, and earnestly, and repeatedly urging you to accept of His surety-ship, and are you ignorant of this covenant, regardless of its requirements, indifferent to its blessings and its benefits, and resolved to continue so? Then the rainbow which surrounds the throne in the sanctuary alone shall throughout eternity serve as a memento of God's infinite mercy, and a monument of your fearful infatuation. Oh! is that rainbow encircling the throne of Jehovah, to tell of his fidelity and love, and of your faithlessness and ingratitude. Oh! are the angelic hosts and the glorified saints gazing with feelings of ecstatic delight on its untold and indescribable grandeur, and are you who are staggering at the mouth of the bottomless pit insensible to its splendour and indifferent to its benefits? We fear that many, and it may be some among you, are unacquainted with the Covenant of Grace, are literally ignorant of its nature and properties and tendencies. We fear that many, and it may be some among you, are thinking, and living, and acting, as if there was a covenant of works whose conditions were to be fulfilled by you, and not a Covenant of Grace where benefits were to be embraced and enjoyed. Oh! if it was a covenant of works whose requirements could be performed by human energy and by mortal power, then around Emmanuel's throne there would have been no rainbow to delight the eye and to ravish the heart of the believer. It is by grace ye are saved, and not by works, lest any man should boast. By the covenant of works ye are condemned already, exposed to infinite wrath, liable to divine vengeance. Oh! then, flee with Christ who will give you an interest in that blessed

covenant which is represented by—"The rainbow that is round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald." God has covenanted with Christ to save you from "the devouring fire and the everlasting burnings," if you will but embrace Him as your Saviour. But have any of you covenanted with your own hearts to destroy yourselves; have any of you trodden under foot the blood of the covenant, and treated it as an unholy thing. Oh! ponder well, ponder well, I beseech you, on these questions; they are pressing, and demand prompt and peremptory replies. The rainbow is around the throne telling you that with God there is forgiveness, that He may be feared, and plenteous redemption that He may be sought unto. Oh! then, lose not a moment, embrace the offers of His mercy. Christ is calling unto you to come unto Him that you may have life. Delay not, but come and look and live. The Spirit is pressing its invitations upon you. Oh! despise them not. By all that is valuable to you in time and throughout eternity, in the name of the living God, we conjure you to reject them not, for though "The rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald," is an assurance to the believer of salvation, yet it contains no such pledge to the unhappy mortal who drops into his tomb impenitent and unpardoned.

AMEN.

"WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT?"

The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?—*Isaiah xxi. 11.*

In the commencement of this chapter, the Prophet describes the overthrow of Babylon. It is a description remarkable for its brevity and power, for the strength and energy of colouring with which the action and the event is painted, and for the variety and rapidity of the transitions. Directed by the Spirit of the Lord, the eye of the Prophet rests on Babylon, and then "a grievous vision is revealed" to him—he perceives the storm of God's indignation blackening in the distance, and gathering gradually over that devoted city—he beholds the lowering clouds of Jehovah's vengeance folding their subtle drapery round the "leaguered wall" of the Assyrian Capital—he hears the command given by Him, who orders the affairs of men and who rules the destinies of empires—"Go up, O Elam, besiege O Media." He is ushered into Belshazzar's banqueting hall—he sees the King's countenance change—the blood leave his cheek—his knees shake—the wine-cup quivering in his trembling grasp—the solitary hand trace the mysterious sentence on the plaster of the wall, predictive of the doom of king and kingdom. The Prophet listens to the captive's voice that gives the

fearful interpretation. He observes the monarch to "bow down at the hearing of it," and he marks his "dismay" and affright at the sight, he beholds "the night of his pleasure turned into fear." The mirth deadened by this inauspicious omen is revived; the sentinels are posted; the wine-cup rapidly circulates; the song swells gaily round, and the arcades of the palace re-echo with the boisterous chorus. Amid this scene of impious riot and unhallowed revel, the prophet's eye is directed to the habitation of Jehovah, and before that infinitely high and holy throne, he descries an angelic messenger with his face veiled by his wing, bent in humility and listening to Jehovah's voice. Speedily the air is cleft, and with a rapidity infinitely surpassing the flight of the lightning, this ministering Spirit makes for the territory of earth, the wave of his pinions ceases to beat as he drops gently into the tent of the allied forces of Medes and Persians and Isaiah hears him deliver his message: "Arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield." And as he is listening, God speaks to him and tells him to "go and set a watchman, and let him declare what he seeth." Removed by the Spirit to the place where the watchman was to make his observations, the prophet anxiously awaits for every communication of this spiritual sentence. He is informed of the advance of the Medes and Persians in chariots drawn by mules and camels—a couple of horsemen are announced, and presently the Prophet's ears are saluted with the cry, "Babylon is fallen—is fallen—and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground."

Isaiah, aroused by this intimation, delivers this message of the Lord to Israel—"O my thrashing and

the corn of my floor!" Ye shall be thrashed by Babylon, but Babylon shall be thrashed by me; ye shall be delivered from the thraldom of the Assyrians, like as ye were rescued from Egyptian bondage; and as the Egyptians perished by my hand, so shall my arms destroy the Assyrians.

Scarce has the Prophet delivered this message to the Israelites, when from Seir there comes a voice crying—"Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" This question seems to import the anxiety of the Edomites to learn when their night of tribulation would end—how long the Assyrians would oppress and afflict them.

Having thus given a running commentary on this striking prophecy of Isaiah—having brought out its literal or primary meaning—we proceed, under an humble dependence on the aid of the Divine Spirit, to give the question of the text a practical and personal bearing—to render it profitable "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." And I propose to treat the question as addressed --1st, to the Church, under the character of a Watchman stationed to report what is passing amid the spiritual night of this world; 2nd, to Ministers, as Watchmen placed in certain parts of the streets of Jerusalem; and, 3rdly, to every man's conscience, as the Watchman planted on the citadel of the heart.

I. And, in the first place, the question may be addressed to the Church—"Watchman, what of the night?" In scripture, under the figure of night, many things are signified. It is used to denote the time of heathen darkness and ignorance and profaneness. And under this sense we may, without a great stretch of

conjecture, conceive the question to be appropriately put to the Church—"Watchman, what of the night?" what progress have you made in illuminating those lands over which the shadows of death and darkness have fallen? The Church has been planted to give light to the world—such a light as will dispel the clouds of error, disperse the mists of prejudice, and dissipate the vapours of superstition—such a light as will melt the icebergs of carnal indifference, and destroy the paralyzing influences of worldly affections—such a light as, when its rays are guided and directed and concentrated on any object by the Spirit, will warm the coldest with an everlasting flame of devotion, and reduce the hardest into the softest and most perfect mould. To cheer the Heaven-ward traveller—to guide the benighted mariner on the dark and tempestuous ocean of this world—a beacon has been lighted on Zion-hill, and numerous are the watchmen who have sworn to keep alive and preserve its blaze, until the gloomy night of time shall be succeeded by the bright morn of eternity. These watchmen are the inhabitants of Zion—the professed Members of the Christian Church—and to them is the question addressed—"Watchman, what of the night?" With what a startling force may that question fall upon the ears of professed Christians. The greatest part of the habitable earth is enveloped amid the darkness of spiritual night—the enemy of souls is committing fearful havoc there—the blaze of Zion's beacon cannot be descried to warn them of danger, or to assure them of assistance. The watchmen are indifferent and unconcerned, they are eating and drinking, buying and selling, marrying and giving in marriage, dreaming

not that millions are perishing unheeded and unpitied.

What punishment would be reckoned too severe for those men who, having the custody of a lighthouse on some perilous part of the coast, should fall asleep and permit the light to be extinguished? and when some ill-fated vessel steered near the coast, and when the mariners are anxiously looking for the light to guide them to some safe haven, and amid the uncertainty and confusion the storm gathers apace, and the vessel, unable to keep off the coast, drifts on shore, till it

"Crashing, spreads in ruin o'er the tide."

What penalty, think you, would be too severe for these men?—what language of indignation could describe their conduct, who, locked in the arms of sleep, heard not the cry of the drowning mariners, which was borne to their very door on the arms of the blast and on the wings of the tempest? And, oh! who would not mingle their sympathies with the widow that is mourning her husband, buried in the deep, or the sister that is lamenting over the corpse of a brother washed by the tide to her feet?—and, oh! what heart would not bleed for the mother who, lonely and sad, is weeping over her lost sailor-boy?

Now the Members of the Church, professed Christians, have been guilty of conduct similar to the men of the lighthouse. The beacon which they vowed to keep blazing they have allowed to be darkened and extinguished; through their sloth and negligence many vessels have foundered and sunk on their voyage to eternity; the crying of perishing multitudes from many a distant land has been wafted by the breath of

the gale to their very door, but it has been unheard and unheeded by them. I am aware they are not devoid of human sympathies—I know they would mingle their tears with the fatherless and the widow and the orphan ; but they have not spiritual sensibilities, and therefore they are indifferent to the fearful massacre of souls which is perpetrating in "the regions of horrid cruelty." I know their ear would be open to the cry, and their hand would be extended to the rescue of the drowning sailor, but they will not hear the cry of those who are about to rush in the burning lake—they will not extend the hand to rescue those who are tottering at the mouth of the bottomless pit. Methinks the question of the text—"Watchman, what of the night?—might dispel the apathy of the most spiritually-indifferent church—might arouse Zion's slumbering inhabitants. When I recall to mind the fact that every Member of a Christian Church solemnly vows to dedicate himself to God's service and cause—promises, by the help of the Lord, to be a burning and a shining light amid the spiritual darkness of this wicked world—declares his determination to labour, by every means in his power, to advance the progress of the Sun of Righteousness—and when I see that the the distant horizon of heathen lands is scarcely tinged by the light of the bright and the Morning Star—I marvel not at the startling effect produced on every Member of the Church when the question is addressed to him—"Watchman, what of the night?"

When I take a retrospect of the past—when I see how many facilities have been opened for commercial enterprise—how professing Christians have traded and settled in almost every quarter of the globe—and

when I look at the few vessels which have sailed from the shores of Christian lands, carrying on their mast-head the blazing torch of truth, and freighted with the tidings of salvation—in contrast with those many which have weighed anchor bearing on their prow the goddess of gain, and containing in their holds the perishable things of earth—and when I cast my eyes on heathen climes under the command of Christians—and when I track these Churches by nought but the blood they have spilt, and the ravages they have caused, and the execration and the curses they have provoked, and the oppression they have inflicted—when I look for the beacon that blazes on Zion hill, I see nought but the fires of unquenchable cupidity, and the flashing meteors of indomitable passion, oh! I turn from this sickening sight, and blush for Christianity so shamefully professed and so shamefully practised—I turn and I raise my feeble voice to the Protestant Churches of Europe, and cry—"Watchman, what of the night?" It was to dispel the dreary night of spiritual darkness that Deity travelled and toiled, suffered and died—it was for this purpose that the groans of Gethsemane were uttered and the agonies of Calvary were endured—it was in effecting this that Evangelists were slain with the edge of the sword—that Apostles were imprisoned and persecuted—that the grand army of Martyrs encountered death. In this great cause have been exhibited daring deeds of self-denial, astounding acts of insuperable moral heroism; perils on land have been braved, perils on the deep have been defied. Oh! then, as the cry is ringing round the battlements of Zion, and re-echoing in the palaces of Jerusalem—"Watchman, what of the

night?—Watchman, what of the night?" oh! should we not awake from our slumbers and grasp our extinguished torches, and light them at the wheel of Jehovah's fiery chariot, and be waving them on high, to be seen by some solitary pioneer in the fastnesses of the wilderness, who may spread among the harassed and dispirited sentinels on the outposts the cheering tidings that the armies of Israel have mustered and are marching to the charge.

When I think of what Christianity was in what were called the days of its infancy, how it was a spacious tree, watered by the blood of the best and the holiest, presenting the fairest blossom and bearing the richest fruit, and when I look on it now, I see its branches more rudely extended, its trunk rounder and larger, but its blossoms are fewer and its fruits are rarer, methinks the Church is like the country of Samaria in the reign of Ahab, it is parched and requires that the Spirit would rain its richest influences upon it. Oh! that, like Elijah on Carmel's summit, we would pray seven times, aye seventy times seven—aye, pray without ceasing—until we see the cloud of rain, though it be but the size of a man's hand, emerging from the ocean—and, oh! that Jehovah would hear our prayers, so that the vineyard may be richly watered, and the fruits be rendered in abundance.

When I think of the men of might that once trod Zion's battlements -when I call to recollection the intrepidity of those who once defended her outposts—when I look back on the burning and the shining lights that scattered their bright and their genial rays through the mists of Jewish prejudice and the clouds of smoke that rose from pagan hecatombs—when I re-

remember them, there seems to me to be carried a cutting reproof to the Church of modern times on the question of the text—"Watchman, what of the night?" Ah, yes! the Church has been indeed slumbering—"Israel's chariot and horse have been cast into a dead sleep"—the ignorance that prevails around us—the spiritual indifference and unconcern which is so deplorably conspicuous—the crying sins of the men of the world—their hatred of God, their love of pleasure, their neglect and misimprovement of ordinances—all these unequivocally tell us, that the boar of the forest has descended on the vineyard—that the spoiler has been desolating the temple—that the traitor has been within the city gates, and that it is time, high time, that the cry be heard within the very precincts of the Sanctuary—"Watchman, what of the night?" Oh! let the question come home to every member of the Church of Christ, let it arouse them to active and zealous and persevering exertion in the cause of the Gospel, and let it awaken the potent voice of believing prayer, that He, who makes the darkness his pavilion, would dispel the shadows of the spiritual night of this world by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, arrayed in all his resplendent glory, and accompanied with all his healing influences.

II. In the second place, the question may be addressed to Ministers as Watchmen placed in certain parts of the streets of Jerusalem.

The state of the Church is generally indicated by the state of the congregations. The Church cannot be awake if its individual congregations are asleep. Hence the propriety of addressing the question to Ministers—"Watchman, what of the night?" In

various parts of Scripture the office and duties of Ministers are described by the figure of Watchmen. We find God giving his commission to Ezekiel in these words—"Son of Man, I have made thee a Watchman unto the house of Israel." The various qualifications requisite for a Watchman correspond with those which are indispensable to a Minister of Salvation. We can conceive the question—"Watchman, what of the night?"—addressed to Ministers with reference to the state of their congregations. Is the night of spiritual death reigning among them? Are they in darkness and obstinately shutting out the light? It is a question which may well rivet the attention of every Minister and summon him to deep and solemn reflection—it is simply, how many in your congregation are dead—dead in trespasses and sins? When the question—"Watchman, what of the night?"—is addressed to Ministers of the Gospel, it signifies—Is there any anxiety among your people for their own souls or the souls of others? Are they aware that the city is devoted to destruction, that the storms of indignation and wrath are about to descend on it—and are they running to and fro, crying out with trembling anxiety, What must I do to be saved? O, when, at the midnight hour, you knock at their doors and summon them to get up in haste and march for the city of refuge, do you appear to them as Lot appeared to his sons-in-law?—do you seem to them as one who is mocking them? To the cry—"Watchman, what of the night?" are there many that have to answer—We have gone our way through the streets of Jerusalem—we have sprung our rattles—we have sounded the alarum trumpet to tell that dangers fearful for magnitude, and disasters

terrible in multitude, were impending; but the inhabitants in our districts have not heeded our warnings, they have heard the blast of the shrill-sounding trumpet, and they have seen our watch-tower red with the beacon's blaze, and its flash has even struck on the windows of their habitation, but they have not arisen, but only turned themselves in their bed, and said with the sluggard—"A little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep."

"Watchman, what of the night?" Does the gross darkness of ignorance still cover your people?—are they not acquainting themselves with God, that they may be at peace?—are their feet stumbling on the dark mountains of perdition and death?—or, does their light so shine among men, that they, seeing their good works, believe that they have been indeed with Jesus, and have learned of him—have drawn their light from Him who is the great Light of the World, which dispels the darkness of every soul, and disperses the clouds which hover over every tabernacle.

Strip the question, "Watchman, what of the night?" of its allegory and figure as addressed to Ministers, and it resolves itself thus—"What effect has your sermons had!—has your preaching been received?" Oh! we fear that the answer would be in the mournful exclamation of the Prophet—"Who hath believed our report?" I can conceive many a godly minister replying thus—"We preach, but men hear not; we exhort, but they profit not; we cry aloud and spare not; we "lift up our voice like a trumpet, but the people see not their transgression, nor the house of Jacob their sins"; we take the thunders of the law and we batter at the conscience, but the triple wall of preju-

dice and carnality yields not —we woo them with the melody of a Redeemer's mercy, and the offers of a Saviour's dying love, but they turn their back upon us with scorn and contempt—we point to the cross, but they will not look and live. They attend on our ministrations with tolerable regularity, and if we follow them from the house of God we find them going back into the world as unmoved and as hardened and impenitent as ever. If we intrude upon them in their scenes of bustle and of business—if we trace their steps to where gather the merry and the thoughtless, the foolish and the frivolous—if we enter their domicile and join their conversation, we find in each and all that the deep doleful delusion has settled on their brain, that time is everything and eternity nothing. There are a few—blessed and ever praised be Sovereign Grace!—who are in the world but not of the world; in their dwellings are heard the raising of joy and melody. Oh! we delight to sojourn for a while with them, to join them in their prayers and commingle our voices in their praises. They are travellers to Zion, and from the bottom of our heart we wish them Godspeed.

But in the great majority of our congregations we fear, and we have too much reason to believe, that in the church and by the family altar, save in the hour of sorrow or the day of mourning, evening and morning sacrifice of prayer and of praise is seldom if ever presented; it is in the prayerless and Godless dwellings that there broods the thickest and the blackest darkness. And oh! when the question comes to us, "Watchman, what of the night?" we are compelled to reply, that the shadows are louring and gloomy,

the clouds dreary and dark; and we sometimes fear that they are thunder-clouds surcharged with the lightning of vengeance, and therefore we often bend "between the porch and the altar," and cry, "Spare the people, O Lord."

III. The question, "Watchman, what of the night?" may, in the third place, be addressed to every man's conscience as the sentinel planted on the citadel of the heart.

To your consciences then, Brethren, I put the question, "What of the night?" Are your souls still in darkness?—have they never been illumined by the flash of conviction?—has the torch of God's wrath, which shall light earth's final conflagration, never cast its glare on the citadel gate. Let Conscience, the sentinel, answer. When the question is put—"Watchman, what of the night?" is there not some conscience that answers, here there is nought but the gloom of midnight; in this cloud-cast dwelling nought is heard but the whisperings of treachery and the mutterings of rebellion; the silence of the night that reigns here is broken by nought but the noise of angry passions engaged in loud and boisterous contention—by nought save the shouts of riot and of revel, as the appetites hold their fierce and fiendish carnival. Here the darkness is so dense, that it is only visible when the gleams of jealousy burst forth, when the scorching flames of desire play along the roof, or when the balls of living fire dart upward from the furnace of remorse. We would address the Watchman, we would say to him, raise your voice above the clamours of contentions, cry that the portals of prejudice and obstinacy may be opened, so that He who can dispel the darkness, and

can calm the storm, and can quench the fire, may enter in and give pardon and peace and purity to the sinful and troubled and polluted soul.

As the cry is rung—"Watchman, what of the night?" is there not some conscience which hears it not, because it is asleep at its post? Oh! if there are any of your consciences slumbering, and not warning you of the enemies that are taking advantage of the night, whose shadows are enveloping your souls, we must tell you that the thunders of the law will not annul God's slumbering vicegerent; that our voice, let it be louder and more shrill than the howl of the hurricane, will not awaken a slumbering conscience. All we can do for you is to pray that the "still small voice" may speak to that oblivious sentinel in the words of the mariner to Jonah, "Arise, thou sleeper, and call upon thy God."

If any of you, brethren, are in darkness, is it not a fearful reflection, that, though the light of the Gospel has been shining upon and around you ever since you opened your eyes on this nether world, you are still in the region and shadow of death. Oh! is it not an awful consideration to think, that when your conscience is asked, "Watchman, what of the night?" it has to give forth its response from the dreary sepulchre, where lies buried every hope of immortality, from the lonesome and loathsome charnel-house of spiritual corruption and death. Oh! we would direct the watchman to look upward, and to cry that he who sent his fire to consume the sacrifice on the Israelites' altar would rekindle that devotional flame which was quenched amid the ruins of the Fall—so that the sepulchral gloom of a heart untenanted by Divinity

might be lighted up by the transcendant brilliancy of that Sun which soars in the uncreated firmament of the highest heavens.

As the cry is sounded—"Watchman, what of the night?"—perhaps a lonely sentinel will tell us that the disastrous gloom of midnight is occasionally illumined by some passing meteor which shoots a few solitary rays through the dreary vista, and is then speedily extinguished amid the rising mists and the gathering clouds—these are the fiery darts of momentary conviction, but they will not kindle the flames of devotion unless fanned by the breath of prayer, and fed by the fuel of the Spirit. There are scarcely any but whose hearts have not experienced these occasional illuminations, but the chilling vapours of earth, and the fire-damps that pervade the caverns of an unregenerate heart, speedily extinguish every light save the candle of the Lord. As we sound the cry—"Watchman, what of the night?" it may be some sad solitary sentinel may tell us, that once the shades of night were dispelled by the light of the Sun of Righteousness, and that its cheering beams suffused continual day, but now clouds of doubt and darkness have fallen around. We say, keep a good look-out, trusty Watchman, and fear not,—from behind these clouds that affright and alarm you, the light of Jehovah's countenance will soon appear, and your ears will be gladdened by the cheering whisper—"In a little wrath I have hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee."

My beloved brethren, we may be earnestly and anxiously exclaiming "Watchman, what of the night?" we may be lamenting that there is so much of the

night of sin remaining, and so little of a day of righteousness dawned in our souls, but let us sorrow not as those who have no hope. Soon shall we be ushered into that holy city, whose gate is pearl and whose wall is sapphire, to dwell beneath that lofty canopy which is formed by the splendid coruscations of righteousness and truth, and illumined by the burning brightness of Him who is from everlasting to everlasting, God. There—no question shall be asked—"Watchman, what of the night?" there—there is no Watchman, because there "is no night."

AMEN.

"THE GLORIOUS LORD."

"But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.—*Isaiah xxxiii. 21.*

THESE words indicate the security of Jerusalem against the attack of Sennacherib. Unlike Egypt or Babylon, she had no majestic rivers like the Nile or the Euphrates to defend her from the approach of her enemies, no sea begirt her walls, where her ships might anchor to dispute the progress of the invader. Though she was unprotected by the navigable river or the broad sea, yet God supplied the want of these, for by His presence and protection He was unto her "a place of broad rivers and streams." While Jerusalem possessed the security of a great river—she was also freed from the disadvantage of it, for it was a river "wherein could go no galley of the enemy, nor could the invader's ships pass thereby," Jerusalem was but ill supplied with water, and when the Prophet makes the intimation of the text, he informs the Jews that the Lord, during Sennacherib's invasion, would furnish them with every needful blessing, and provide them every requisite comfort.

Strip this text of all its metaphor, and it resolves itself into the declaration that as Jerusalem had no navigable river or sea to defend her in case of an attack, so the Spiritual Jerusalem is unprotected by nature and by art; but as Jehovah proved to Jerusalem

when surrounded by her foes that He was to her in the place of broad rivers and streams, so what his Church now wants in nature and in art, he will abundantly make up to her in grace.

To illustrate and enforce the truths involved in this text, we observe in the first place :—

I. That as Jerusalem of old was without the natural defence of a river or a sea, so the Spiritual Jerusalem now is totally unprotected by nature.

Not merely is the Church of Christ unprotected by nature, but nature is in direct hostility to its progress and interests. The doctrines it promulgates, the precepts it enjoins, the practice it insists upon—all these are offensive to the natural feelings of a fallen race. Christianity requires of its followers the most searching and rigid self-denial—whatever is dear to the natural heart, whatever is pleasing to the carnal eye, whatever is gratifying to the senses, all must be relinquished by those "who take up their cross and follow Christ." Christianity demands that the votary of earthly glory should trample under foot his unhallowed idol—that the lover of pleasure should nauseate his enjoyments, and the unholy become thoughtful and zealous and godly, that the slave of griping avarice should strike off his fetters. In a word—Christianity demands that they who were prompted and persuaded from their very infancy by everything round and about them to practice wickedness, Christianity imperatively demands of them, at once and without hesitation, "to cease to do evil and to learn to do well." When we reflect that the object of Christianity is to destroy the influence of our present nature, to make it anew, to remove it altogether, and to substitute in its place another and

a different nature; when we take this into consideration we may well see that Christianity has nothing to expect from man in his natural state but the most obstinate and unbending opposition. "The carnal or natural heart is enmity against God."

As Egypt and Babylon—the enemies and oppressers of Jerusalem—enjoyed the natural defence of broad rivers and streams, so in like manner every other system of religion opposed to Christianity, is fostered and maintained and defended by nature. To what are we mainly to attribute the rapid and wide extent of the fearful and revolting delusions propounded by the Seer of Mecca—to naught else can we more truly ascribe the influence of his opinions than to this—that they were agreeable to the depraved nature and vicious appetites of fallen humanity. Mahommedanism finds a defence in nature. Its principles fully accord with the desires and cravings of minds originally corrupt; that hideous compound of monstrous iniquity and glaring impiety called Socialism, is in many cases impregnable when assailed by intellectual and moral means, and its impregnability is owing to the shelter which vitiated human nature affords it. Behind that strong rampart called human nature has scepticisms, and divers Mahommedan delusions, and every system of low and lax morality, braved many an attack and stood out many a siege. But Christianity has met with nothing from nature but coldness and indifference and opposition. Around the Spiritual Jerusalem, nature has reared no bulwarks and no battlements, but has thrown her sheltering wing over the enemies of God and of truth. The Christian warfare is a constant and continued struggle against nature. Had the

Church no defence to look too save nature, then she would be easily trampled upon by every foe, no matter how puny or insignificant.

There is nothing in the nature of man to lead him to arise in defence of the Church of God; but there is everything to induce him to cut down her cords and to uproot her stakes. Jerusalem of old had some natural defences—the mountains and the valleys that surrounded her formed excellent bulwarks; but the Spiritual Jerusalem is totally unprotected, nature having exhausted her resources in rearing defences around the Church's enemies: Zion's foes are protected by the troubled sea of passion, by mountains of prejudice, by the rivers and the streams of worldly pleasure and carnal enjoyment, by "the granite of the heart of stone," by the adamantine column of pride, by the gloomy ravine of ignorance—whatever nature could supply she has lavished upon the enemies of Jerusalem.

From the day that the Church militant first unfurled her standard even until now, has she had to contend against the most bitter and unbending opposition presented by nature. Every child of Adam is born breathing enmity to Zion and her interests; from infancy to manhood, from manhood to old age, he is trained by the precept and example of the men around him, to resist her claims and to divide her authority. As physical nature denied Jerusalem the defence of rivers and of streams, so human nature, instead of defending, is opposing the Spiritual Jerusalem with unwearied perseverance.

II. But we observe—secondly—that not merely is the Church of God unprotected by nature, but she is

also undefended by art.

Art could not supply Jerusalem with these rivers and streams which nature had denied it, the contrivance and ingenuity of man could not make up for this deficiency. Art could not create a sea to serve Jerusalem's frontier, nor a broad river unnavigable by every gallant ship, save her own. So in like manner the Spiritual Jerusalem is as unprotected by art as she is by nature. Trace we the progress of Christianity, and we will find that, like Nature, art instead of defending has opposed it. Christianity at its commencement was despised, and threatened, and persecuted by the learned of the synagogue; it was ridiculed by the heathen sages; it was frowned upon in the famed seats of philosophy; against it the orator directed the storm of his sarcasm, and the sweep of his rhetoric. In looking into the ranks of those who have opposed its progress, and laboured to arrest its ascendancy, we will find that many of them were those who were learned in this world's wisdom, for, there it is, that "not many wise and not many noble are chosen." Man's intellect is naturally opposed to Christianity; it is only intellect sanctified by grace, which will contribute its humble aid to the furtherance of the Gospel. Christianity exposes the native feebleness of man's intellect, shews how puny and powerless all its effects were in ameliorating the condition of the human race. It thoroughly and completely humbles the pride of intellect; it sweeps away the empty assumptions of the philosophic and dissipates the airy and idle dreams of the Poetic. The whole Gospel system rests upon this principle—a principle most humiliating to man; the principle

that what he was unable to do, Christ has done for him, and the sum and substance of the whole matter is, that man could do nothing, and that Christ has done everything.

When we take this into account, we will no longer wonder that so many of the intellectual and philosophic of the earth have employed their talents to check the progress of Christianity—have exerted their energies in vainly attempting to sap the foundations of Zion. But we need not waste words in remarking on the backwardness and unwillingness of the human intellect to support the principles and doctrines of Christianity—the great and important fact is, its inability. The art of man cannot defend Zion, the most intuitive perception cannot detect the wiles of the wicked one, the combined energies of the most gigantic intellect cannot withstand the assaults of Satan, an arm of flesh cannot crush the power of the Devil. Jerusalem would soon fall a prey to the spoiler if she had none but human defenders within her walls, or human watchmen on her battlements.

III. Had you stood by Jerusalem as Sennacherib was advancing with his hosts to attack it, and had you been informed that broad rivers and streams were essential to the defence of the city, and had you been further told that it was necessary for these rivers to be such as to be navigable by no galley with oars, or gallant ship, save her own, would you not have at once said, Jerusalem will fall into the hands of her enemies? So, in like manner, as we look upon the Church of God now, when we find nature denying her every defence, art unwilling and unable to supply what Nature has refused, everything around and

about her prejudicial to her well-being and hostile to her interest, when we know that she has many secret foes lurking within her pale, and that a resolute band encircle her walls, labouring to accomplish her overthrow—waiting and watching continually to effect her ruin, when we look at her apparently defenceless state, are we not ready to believe that she cannot hold out longer. But, blessed be God! Grace supplies what nature and art have refused. As the glorious Lord was to Jerusalem a place of broad rivers and streams wherein could go no galley with oars, neither could gallant ship pass thereby, as an unseen arm smote the Syrian host with desolation and destruction, so over the interests of the Spiritual Jerusalem now, an unseen eye is watching, and an unseen hand is defending her portals and prostrating her assailants. Let us look at the nature and character of this unseen defender, "then the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams." It is the glorious Lord—glorious in might; glorious in battle; glorious in holiness; fearful in praises; continually doing wonders. In this text the Church has the direct assurance of the presence and protection of her sole and only Head.

She ought, therefore, to be alarmed at no danger, neither the number nor the strength of her foes, neither the perfidy nor cowardice of her false friends should dismay her.

The carnal heart may nourish enmity against her, the intellectualist, puffed up with a wisdom, falsely so-called, may take the field against her, the great and the mighty ones of the earth, the wise and the learned of the world, may swell the ranks of her enemies, but

though encompassed by a host mightier and more numerous by far than that of the Assyrians which beleagured Jerusalem, still let her remember the blessed and encouraging assurance contained in my text, "the Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams wherein can go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby." When the Church is weak and deserted—when she appears to be on the eve of falling into the hands of her enemies—let us ever remember the promise of the text, that though all be against her, though every human defence be denied her, yet the Glorious Lord is there, as her Sun and Shield.

Superstition and infidelity, error and destruction may be spreading, numerous may be the victims over whom they are exerting their destroying influence; loud may be the threats that are uttered in the invaders' camp, deep and dark may be the hatred breathed towards Zion; the votaries of a gloomy superstition and the victims of a withering infidelity coalesce to effectuate her overthrow: the artillery of the venal press may be directed against her bulwarks, and many an insidious scheme tried to sap her foundations: but while watching and praying for the purity and preservation of our beloved Jerusalem, let us remember the declaration of the Prophet, "the Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams wherein can go no galley with oars, nor gallant ship pass thereby." Around Zion there is a broad and mighty river: on its banks may be pitched the tents of the enemy, but their ships cannot navigate its windings; their galleys cannot clear its bar; it is a river in which none but one vessel can sail, and

that vessel is the ark of the Covenant, and within it there never yet was found a foul traitor or a false friend.

But as we have already hinted that Jerusalem was ill supplied with water, so the declaration of the Lord that He would be unto her in place of broad rivers and streams, informed her that while he would be a river and a broad river to defend her from the approach and attack of her enemies, he would be streams to provide—full streams to provide plentifully all possible supplies. So to carry out the analogy we observe that God gives the Spiritual Jerusalem all needful blessings.

When the Church is wearied and worn, when the faith of many is waxing weak, and their love is becoming cold, he is often pleased to send a time of refreshing from on high. As the Prophet Isaiah evidently made an allusion in our text to the rivers that defended Egypt and Babylon, so there is an analogy that may be drawn betwixt the Nile and the river that is in Zion. As the Nile by overflowing its banks gave richness and fertility to the land of Egypt, as the country of the Pharoahs actually and solely depended for subsistence on the rising and ebbing of that river, so in like manner the vineyard of the Lord is enriched and fertilized by the overflowings of that glorious stream which winds its blessed course throughout the city of our Solemnities—the habitation of our Great King. And if you wish to know where the fountain is, whence issues this refreshing stream, we must point you to Jehovah's high and holy Throne. Beneath it is the fountain of living waters, clear as crystal, on which the eye of the rapt exile in Patmos

gazed with ravishing delight. As its waters meander the city of the living God, you may descry on their brink the glorified saints, not like the Israelites by Babel's streams, with the tear trembling in their eye, and the sigh struggling in their bosom, and the harp unstrung, suspended on the willow; but you will discover them clothed in their robes of snowy whiteness, and amid the burning brightness of Him who is from everlasting to everlasting God; you will behold their countenances all radiant with glory, having no trace of humanity's tears, and bearing no relique of nature's sorrows; for amid the pealing notes of the Christian's song, amid the joyous anthems of Seraph and of Saint, you will hear the voice of Him who walketh amid the seven golden candlesticks, saying—"Eat, O Friends, yea drink abundantly, O Beloved."

Unlike the river that surrounded Babylon, the river that encompasses Zion can never be dried up, nor its channel changed. When Babylon was taken by Cyrus, the plan adopted for that object was to change the course of the Euphrates, which being effected, the Medes and the Persians marched through the bed of the river, and entered, triumphant, the banqueting hall of the Assyrian monarch. But the river that is in Zion is ever full and ever flowing. Its course can never be altered. The channel through which it passes is immutable as the nature of Jehovah, and unchangeable as His eternal Throne.

Jerusalem is thus defended and refreshed; oh! must it not delight the heart of the believer to think that the tabernacle where he dwells is thus specially provided for and protected by God. As from Zion's watch-tower he looks out and descries in the vast

wilderness of this world, the myriads that are encamped against it; and as from the spot where Zion's beacon blazes, he espies the well oared galley, and the gallant ship, that on the sea of time are pirating vessels freighted for eternity, and as he gazes on the mighty river whose majestic sweep encompasses Jerusalem, and as he looks on the streams that are within the city for the refreshing of the natives and for the re-invigorating of Zion's soldiers; as he witnesses the impregnable protections without, and the imperishable provisions within, oh! can he refrain from giving his testimony to the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy—"There the glorious Lord will be unto us in the place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby."

But while the words of my text are applicable to the Spiritual Jerusalem, to the Church collectively, I see at the same time a clear propriety in addressing them to believers individually.

All of us, brethren, are weak and defenceless by nature. We were conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity. But this text informs us that we will be made strong by grace. We may be as unstable as water, but grace can make us firmer than adamant. We may be the very chief of sinners, but grace can make us as pure as the holiest of saints. The nature we inherited from Adam can afford us no defence when assailed by the powers of darkness, but grace furnishes us with a new nature, which protects us from all the fiery darts of the wicked one. Grace forms in our hearts a fountain of living water springing up into everlasting life. The river that issues therefrom de-

fends the moral citadel, for it is unassailable by the enemy's oared galley or the invader's gallant ship. The believer is equally unprotected by reason and intellect. If reason could have upheld a system of pure and undeviating morality; if intellect could have mastered the power of passion; if the splendid endowments of genius could have enriched the pearls of piety and the treasures of religion—then revelation was unnecessary, then the influences of the Spirit were useless, then grace was nought but a supernumerary agent. History and experience, however, give unerring testimony to the imperfections of reason and the feebleness of intellect. Even now, when we gaze on the brilliant feats of genius, when we admire the greatness of the head, how often are we compelled to deplore the grossness of the heart. Though dazzling may be the master spirit that soars on the wing of fancy and roves on the land of imagination, yet how weak in comparison with that which eagle-like takes its flight on high, and on the broad expansive pinion of faith explores the land of immortality.

It is a deep and dire delusion to suppose that education without religion will make a man wiser and better. Such a system of education is wrong in principle and ruinous in its consequences. A liberal education, a refined intellect, a masculine mind will not protect the son from the wiles, and the snares, and the seductions of the devil. Intellect cannot furnish the girdle of truth, nor the breast-plate of righteousness, nor the shield of faith, nor the helmet of salvation, nor the sword of the Spirit, nor the power and gift of prayer—and without these the believer is like Samson shorn of his locks, feeble and impotent in

the hands of the Philistines. It is not the streams which issue from the deep wells of ancient lore, or the fountains of modern literature which will protect an immortal soul from being attacked by the oared gallies and the gallant ships of its enemies. Unless the glorious Lord be around it as a place of broad rivers and streams, soon will it be the galley-slave of Satan, soon will it be a dweller in that place whose portion is the broad lake of brimstone and of fire.

The believer, so long as he is a dweller in this parched and perishing wilderness, is often thirsting for the water-brooks, and He who protects him from his foes, and supplies his spiritual wants, sends down upon him the former and the latter rain, to refresh his spirit and recruit his energies. Let us, my beloved brethren, bless the Lord for His goodness, let us praise His name for the blessed and encouraging assurance that our much-loved Jerusalem shall never be termed desolate or forsaken, but, so long as time endures, shall be a praise on the earth.

And when dangers are hovering near our Church and ourselves ; and when we descry the oared galley rising on the breakers, and the gallant ship spreading out her sails, let us not be alarmed—Zion is secure—Jerusalem is safe, for the prophecy in our text shall be fulfilled in our experience ; the glorious Lord shall be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. AMEN.

"TEKEL."

"Tekel, thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting."—*Daniel v. 27.*

When God gives any peculiar manifestation of his presence or his power, it is ever amid circumstances of imposing solemnity, and corresponding with a singular exactness to the nature of the occasion. When He appeared on Sinai to proclaim to the Israelites His laws, the elements of nature formed His train—the cloud was His chariot, borne on the wings of the tempest; the flashing lightning and the bursting thunder His glorious pioneers; and so overpowering was the terror of the scene that the people trembled and the mount shook. When the birth of the Messiah was announced to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem, the gloom of midnight was dispelled by the glory of the Lord, as it shone around them in all its splendour, and its silence was broken by the angel's voice as he said—"I bring you good tidings of great joy." In the one case was displayed the Sovereignty of Eternal Justice, and in the other the Sovereignty of Eternal Mercy, and each were accompanied with their distinguishing figurative characteristics—in the one, the eye of man can see nought save the darkness of despondency and despair; in the other, he beholds the light of joy and of hope. Go to Sinai and you behold its cloud-capped summit illumined by the lightnings of vengeance; go to Bethlehem and you behold the darkness of a benighted world dispelled by the

bursting of the bright effulgence of the Sun of Righteousness.

In both these instances we have our covenant explained and confirmed, that when Jehovah manifests His presence or His power, it is ever amid circumstances not only solemn, but ever suitable for such a revelation; and of this statement we have another illustration in the chapter from which our text is taken.

Belshazzar, king of Babylon, made a great feast to a thousand of his lords. When the company were assembled and the wine-cup passing rapidly round, he ordered the vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple of Jerusalem to be brought in; they were placed on the banqueting table, and in mockery of Him who rules supreme over all, he and his princes and wives and concubines drank out of them. As this scene of unhallowed revelry and daring impiety went forward, no thunders shook the palace, no lightnings glanced through the banqueting hall to destroy the riotous blasphemers; the shout of mirth and the song of joy alone were heard, "the harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe and wine were in their feasts"; but the hand of Eternal Justice was not shortened that it could not punish; the sword of Divine Vengeance was not rusting in the scabbard: Jehovah had other avenging messengers than the thunder and the lightning, the earthquake and the whirlwind—the city was beleaguered by a foreign foe, the Mede was at the gate. No trumpet summoned the revelling company to arms, no voice was heard to warn them of their danger or inform them of their destruction; inflamed with wine and puffed up with pride, they were self-secure, entertaining no fears and dreaming of no dangers. But suddenly a change comes

over this festive scene—the eye of the king rests on a hand which is tracing mysterious letters on the plaster of the wall; and instantly his countenance changes, the blood leaves his cheek, his knees shake, the wine-cup quivers in his trembling grasp, and the mirth of every reveller is deadened. The man that lately mocked the Most High, and who desecrated his vessels, and who seemed to brave His thunders and defy His vengeance, now trembles when he sees a mysterious hand writing a message from the Lord. It was not the winged pestilence that breathed through Belshazzar's hall, it was not the armies of destruction lodged in the vitals of the monarch, it was not any such palpable or terrible dispensation of providence which cast such a gloom and dread over Babylon's palace; it was when they beheld the fingers of God that the reveller was silenced and the monarch was afraid. And be it observed, the reveller was silenced and the monarch became afraid before they knew the meaning of the mysterious inscription. A sight of the hand of God mars their mirth, destroys their enjoyments, and fills them with dread and with alarm. Here we have a very striking instance of the statement with which we started, that Jehovah has all his manifestations singularly and exactly adapted to the circumstances of the case. Belshazzar and his guests were mocking Him; heated with wine they were heedless of consequences; delighting to dishonour Him, and glorying in their shame, they were praising their dumb idols; but the moment the hand appears, then their guilty fears are awakened, then their conscience tells them that the most high God ruleth in the king-

dom of men, and that He appointeth over it whomsoever He will.

We have so far alluded to the circumstances under which the words of our text were addressed, in order to bring out the introductory fact with which we started; and this being noted, we would now proceed to consider the nature of the intimation contained in the text before us. In as far as these words regarded Belshazzar, they were an intimation to him that his conduct as a man and as a monarch, when tested by the unerring standard of Him who rules in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth, was such that he must now resign his kingdom together with his life. He whose theme is justice and judgment had scrutinized and examined his conduct, and the result of that investigation was now communicated to him in these words—"Tekel, thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting."

This text is applicable to many besides the king of Babylon. Brethren, will you be astonished when I say that of you a similiar sentence is pronounced—"Tekel, thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting." Though no mysterious hand has traced on the plaster of the wall such a sentence as is recorded in my text—yet true it is, yea most true, that on every man, woman, and child, within the walls of this church, and within the boundaries of this earth, such a sentence has been pronounced by the mouth of Him "who is not a man that He should lie, nor the Son of Man that He should repent."

The hand of Divine Justice holds the balance, and in the one scale there is a broken law, and if you were placed in the other, as you are in yourselves, then

neither God, nor angels, nor men could pronounce a different sentence from the one contained here—"Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting." Let you who have led what is called a good life, whose general deportment has been characterized by what is called amiability, who have been retiring, gentle, and inoffensive, regular and sober in your conduct, honorable in your dealings, and temperate in your lives; let you wish this catalogue of abstract virtues to be placed in the scale, the sentence would still be "Tekel"; and if you ask what your fate in eternity will be, the answer is, your portion is with Belshazzar in the midst of everlasting burnings.

Some of you may have been dissipated in your habits and dissolute in your lives; like Belshazzar you may have "tarried long at the wine," and joined in the revels of the vicious and the profane; but now your conduct is completely changed, exemplary in your moral deportment, rigidly abstaining from your former flagitiousness, you bear a character and exhibit a conduct which is free from outward stain, and, as men say, wholly unimpeachable; well, let all this change of conduct, let all this salutary reformation of character be placed in the scale with you, still it matters not, for the sentence is the same as it was when you were mocking with the blasphemer and carousing with the reveller; the sentence is still "Tekel," and your eternal destiny is still with Belshazzar in the land of darkness and despair.

Some of you may be useful in your day and generation; placed in an exalted station of life, you may give countenance to what is good, and by your influence among men, promote the interest of the Church;

blessed with an abundance of the good things of this life, you may be charitable according to your means, kind and benevolent as far as your circle extends—let all your long list of charities and benevolent deeds be placed with you in the same scale, still it will not alter the sentence that must be pronounced over you—"Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting; still it will not save you from the punishment awaiting you—exclusion from the presence of God for ever.

A man may be virtuous and great and wealthy and learned, he may be distinguished for his philanthropy and for the general excellency of his character; but though all of these qualifications and attainments were placed with him in the scale, still the result would be as contained in the words of our text—"Tekel, thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting."

To every one without exception, to every one who is a stranger to God and Christ, who has not a Saviour's righteousness imputed to him, to every one in whom the holy and living principle of justifying faith has never been implanted; to every one in such circumstances are the words of my text applicable—"Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting." The law that has been broken is infinite, and it is impossible for a finite being to give the necessary satisfaction. In the one scale there is what is infinite, in the other what is finite; it is equally improbable, as it is impossible, that the one can outweigh the other.

Many, no doubt, will regard these as hard sayings, as containing harsh doctrines; they may give them what names they please, still if the Bible be true, and if these are the doctrines of the Bible, then they must be received as unquestionable, whether they appear

hard or soft, harsh or pleasant. There is no doctrine in the whole of Scripture so explicitly stated, and so strongly and frequently enforced, than this—that it is "through grace and not of ourselves that we are saved." There is nothing that will balance the scales save the righteousness of Christ; let them who have had their Redeemer's righteousness imputed to them, and who have received it through faith; let them be placed in that scale, and then the sentence will be—"Thou hast been weighed in the balances and there is nothing awanting."

When gold or silver are mixed with baser ingredients, then, generally speaking, when they are placed in the scales they are found to be light. So we read in Scripture of Christ sitting as a Refiner, and it is when He has placed the soul of the Believer in the furnace of affliction, and purified it from its original debasement and native pollution; it is then, having passed through the furnace, like pure gold thoroughly purged from its dross; it is then that when placed in the balances it is not found wanting, but found worthy of honour and immortality.

God may give you no visible or sensible communication that in the councils of heaven this sentence is recorded of you—"Weighed in the balances and found wanting." Though no inscription is legible on the walls of your closet, yet in the Book of God's remembrance there may be standing against your name this terrible and emphatic handwriting—"Tekel, thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting"; for it is no declaration of mine, but a declaration over and over again repeated and urged in this blessed Bible, unless ye are in Christ a new

creature, ye are under the sentence and curse of the law, exposed to God's wrath here and hereafter. Be not deceived, Brethren, though you may never have been guilty of the excesses wherewith Belshazzar was chargeable; though you may never have oppressed and persecuted and injured the people of God; though you may never have insulted the Most High by desecrating what He had peculiarly sanctified; yet though you may be singularly free from all these, yet over you may be passed the sentence—"Tekel, thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting." If ye have not been washed and purified and sanctified, if the Spirit of God has not operated on your hearts, renewing your wills and changing your natures, if ye have never felt what it is to be born anew in Christ, what it is to lament and mourn over Him, what it is to be in bitterness on account of the depravity of your affections and the carnality of your desires; if ye have never felt what it is to look to the Cross, and see there all that a dying sinner can long for, and all that a regenerated soul can enjoy; then, as regards you and your present state, we may safely affirm "that were ye to be weighed in the balance ye would be found wanting." If in your general conduct and deportment ye act but little under the deep and solemn conviction that the eye of God is resting upon you, superintending your every thought and watching your every action; if, in the varied duties and occupations of your sphere, ye think but little of promoting the glory of God and the good of souls; of maintaining the honour of your Redeemer and advancing the interests of His cause; if ye are busy with the bustling, gay with the giddy, careless with the indifferent; if ye attend to the busi-

ness of the world, engage in its pleasures, partake of its amusements ; if ye do all this, forgetful that there lies upon you the awfully important and responsible duty of preparing for another world, "of working out your salvation with fear and trembling," I repeat, with emphasis, if ye are living in this world as if it were your home, as if there was no other world to come, then I say that "were ye now to be weighed in the balance, ye would be assuredly found wanting."

The words of our text were primarily addressed to Belshazzar, and scarce was the sentence passed before the punishment followed. Though you may not be chargeable with sins the same as his, yet they may be very similar in their nature. He had polluted the vessels of the Most High God, and in doing so, had insulted His Majesty, and grievously trampled under foot His prerogatives. You may have sat at Jehovah's banqueting table, and you may have handled the vessels of the sanctuary, and you may have as effectually polluted them with your touch as did the Babylonish monarch and his revelling guests ; you may have sat at a communion table and there mocked God as much, with a hypocritical display of friendship and attachment, as did Belshazzar and his lords with their audacious blasphemy and daring impiety. In your feasts and in your festivals at this season of general rejoicing, God may have been as little in your thoughts as He was in those of Belshazzar while presiding at his royal entertainment.

Examine, yea examine most carefully, whether or not it can be truly said of you—"Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting." Now your eye may not see the balance which the Sovereign Dispenser

of all events is holding in His hands; but upon that terrible day, when the secrets of men shall be brought to light, and when every inhabitant of earth shall be called up to judgment; then will that balance be exhibited, and then will each be weighed; and, oh! woe betide the man who shall then be found wanting.

Brethren! I wish to press earnestly upon you the solemn and important truth, that unless ye have an interest in Christ, unless ye have been justified through His finished work, unless ye have been sanctified by His Spirit, ye can never enjoy His presence in glory, ye can never partake of the unspeakable delights of the Redeemed, ye can never mingle among that glorious throng, where happiness is complete, uninterrupted, and never-ending.

The text does not bear directly upon this important article of Divinity, viz.: Salvation through Christ, and through Christ alone; but I have selected it in order that I may sound it in your ears as a warning against all those who are either indifferent to their salvation, or who are building their hopes of heaven on other foundations than that corner-stone which is laid in Zion, both sure and precious, in order, I say, to summon each and all to abandon every refuge of his, and to trust in no name save the name of Jesus. For, Brethren, if ye are not in truth and in deed in Christ, no matter what your professions are, no matter how fair your Christian character may be, still on the great day of account the Judge will pronounce over you the awful and terrible sentence that was inscribed on the plaster of Belshazzar's banqueting hall—"Tekel, thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting."

Brethren! what effect ought the very possibility of

such a sentence being one day executed upon you—I say, what effect ought it to have on your mind and conduct? Had the Babylonian monarch been informed that on the very night of his feast the Persian was at his gate, that every pass to his capital was occupied by a foreign army, that Babylon, once so famous and so powerful, was to be for ever laid prostrate, that his days were numbered, that he had been weighed in the balance and found wanting, and that now the vengeance of the Most High was to be executed against him, I say, had all this information been communicated to him, would he not have been up and doing, diligently and prayerfully labouring to make his peace with God, in order that a judgment so awful and terrible might be stayed, in order that a punishment so fearful and tremendous might be averted? I believe that Belshazzar, hardened in iniquity as he was, would have gone to his knees in fear and in trembling, to supplicate mercy and pardon. Now, over you who are still strangers to Christ, who have not accepted of His offers, and who have turned a deaf ear to his warnings, who are trusting in yourselves and your own works, instead of confiding in Christ and His finished atonement,—I say, that over you who have scorned the love and despised the sacrifice of your Redeemer—over you may be pronounced, even now, the awful sentence—"Tekel, thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting"; and though no angel may be sent to inscribe it on the wall of this church, or on the plaster of your closet, yet in the records of Heaven's chancery the pen of the Archangel may be minuting your fearful doom. Ere the gloom of the approaching midnight is dispelled, death, the last enemy, may stand at your

threshold, like as the Medes and the Persians encompassed Belshazzar's gate; and then you, as the Jewish captive, will know that your days are numbered, that ye are weighed in the balance and found wanting.

Ere the year 1859 comes to a close, aye even this night, your soul may be required of you, and if ye are not united to Christ in an everlasting covenant, if ye are not the Lord's, what other sentence can you anticipate, what other judgment can ye expect, than this—"Weighed in the balance and found wanting."

Ah! Brethren, certain it is that there is a day fast speeding on when you must all stand before the tribunal of Christ, and equally certain it is that your every thought and motive will be strictly and rigidly examined and scrutinized. Your conduct and character may have the world's approval, your own conscience may be so seared and blunted as even now to give its testimony in your favour, but when placed in the balance of Eternal Justice, the approbation of an unjust world, or a proud conscience, will avail nothing—nothing can avert the fearful *addendum*—"Thou art found wanting," save the Righteousness of Christ.

If there is anything alluring to our immortal spirit in enjoying the presence of Him at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore; if there is anything enticing in being permitted to dwell in that country where there is no remorse and no sighing and no separation; if there is anything delightful in residing in that glorious city whose wall is sapphire, whose gate is pearl, whose streets are gold, and whose sun is Christ; then be ye all induced, be ye entreated, be persuaded to close at once with the offers of the Gospel, and accept of Jesus as your Lord and Saviour.

Oh! if there is anything terrible in being cast into outer darkness, a prey to the worm which never dies, and in the midst of that fire which is never quenched; if there is anything fearful in everlasting misery and never-ending woe; then be ye persuaded to embrace Christ, for without Him such must assuredly be your fate, for on the day of final retribution, when the balance is adjusted, it will be said of each and all who are ignorant of Christ and His redemption—"Tekel, thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting." If any of you shall be among that unhappy number, you will have this reflection to aggravate your misery, that though God offered to be your Helper and Saviour, yet you through obstinacy and unbelief destroyed yourselves. AMEN.

"WHY STAND YE HERE ALL THE DAY IDLE?"

"Why stand ye here all the day idle?"—*Matt. xx. 6.*

We all profess to have been sent into this world upon a special mission. And the object of that mission is, in all our various relations and stations, and situations of life, "to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever." For, "whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." We all openly and publicly acknowledge that we have been sent by our Lord and Master to work in His vineyard; we admit that the sovereign injunction is resting upon us, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

If such, Brethren, be your admission and acknowledgment, then surely the words of my text are not applicable to you, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" But there is a palpable difference betwixt the admission and the conviction of a truth; there is often a wide contrariety between profession and practice; it is one thing "to say, Lord, Lord," and it is another and a very different thing "to do the will of the Lord." You may admit that there is a paramount and pressing necessity upon you to be earnest and diligent on carrying on the work of your salvation; you may confess that it is pre-eminently incumbent upon you now "to make your calling and election

sure," yet, notwithstanding this admission and confession, you may be "standing all the day idle,"—idle, I mean, as regards the great work which God has given you to do. I know better than to hazard the averment, that men in general are idle. No, oh, no! endowed they are with active powers, and these powers they are daily exercising in the promotion of good or evil; in advancing the cause of Christ or Belial; in saving or damning an immortal soul. Abstractly speaking, there is no such thing as idleness or inactivity—the life of the veriest sluggard is a constant succession of actions—"the soul of man is like a watch that goes as continuously when it goes wrong as when it goes right."

The question then introduced to your notice in my text, is, "are you standing here all the day idle as regards salvation work?" Idleness, in this respect, we fear, is a wide-spread epidemical disease, under which both professors and profane are grievously labouring and pining away. This disease, moreover, is a deceitful disease, for many suffering under it imagine that instead of being idle and sluggish, they are active and energetic. Yes! they labour, but it is "for that which satisfieth not"—they spend their strength and substance on trifles light as air. Their salvation-work is nothing more and nothing less than a profitless process of religious routine—a weary round of ceremonial duties, a formal display of vapid phylacteries –a souless, heartless operation, consisting merely of bodily service and lip-homage. "Vox et praterea nihil"—"sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." Here is the sum-total of what they call salvation-work. The dawn of the morning awakes

them from their slumbers; they arise from their couch, prompted by the instinct of habit, which gross depravity has neither blunted nor eradicated. They kneel down and offer up their usual prayer (and many do not do that much, aye, it may be even some of your number). They proceed to resume their ordinary avocation. These discharged, they read a portion of the Word of God; present the evening supplication (and many are not so scrupulously exact, aye, it may be even among you, not a few), then betake themselves to rest, and for six days of the week, with but slight or insignificant interruptions, this is the regular routine. On the Sabbath day they cease from their ordinary occupations; attend the church, chapel, or meeting-house; engage in the services of the sanctuary with becoming decorum and outward devotion; return to their dwellings; passing some general remark on the sermon or sermons which they have heard; put a few catachetical questions to their children and servants; read a larger portion of the scriptures; offer up a longer prayer than on other days (and, perhaps, many among you even don't do that); seek their natural rest under the shadows of the night, and awaking strengthened and refreshed, plod on in the beaten track of their usual employments.

Now, my brethren, seriously speaking, is there anything here, that, with the slightest approach to propriety, could in truth and in justice be termed spiritual activity and energy? I solemnly ask you, is there in this conduct any tittle or even the shadow of an appearance of complying with the peremptory order, "work out your own salvation with fear and

trembling?" Men and brethren—we put it to your hearts and consciences, if there is anything there that savours of earnestness of purpose or intensity of action. Can you for a moment suppose that the individuals, whose characteristics of conduct we have now described, are persuaded and convinced that the dread sentence of a broken law is resting on their guilty and doomed heads; and that the loud and urgent call is ringing in the ears, "to flee from the wrath to come;" to betake themselves to "the strongholds as prisoners of hope?" To such persons, surely, oh! surely, the words of my text are addressed with a pith the most potent and a point the most personal. "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" If the salvation of the dying body was involved, would they manifest such restlessness and languor; such sloth and sluggishness; such coldness and apathy, and indifference? No! no! to preserve it, every means in hot haste would be readily adopted, and with resolute energy and untiring activity perseveringly employed; and not an effort would be left untried until failure succeeding failure had stamped every corresponding result with the impress of impossibility. Why, then, is it otherwise with regard to the salvation of the soul? Is it less precious than the body? Can the value of a *deathless* soul be for one moment compared with that of a *dying* body? Oh, no! Look at the magnitude of the question put by the Saviour of the soul, "What will it profit a man though he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" "What will a man give in exchange for his soul?" Alas! alas! multitudes are idling their time "hatching cockatrice's eggs, and weaving the spider's web."

Let me, my brethren, bring under your notice some tests, by a right and accurate examination of which you will be enabled to judge whether the language of my text is applicable to you. And I observe, in the

1st place—That a want of spiritual appetite is a proof of spiritual idleness. Brethren, reflect for a moment, is there, think you, much appetite amongst us for spiritual food? With what a keen appetite and sweet relish does the hard-working labourer enjoy his daily bread; active exertion whets his desire, and contentment seasons his enjoyment of his meals; and so, in like manner, it is they who are never weary in well-doing that hunger and thirst after righteousness. It is they who possess godliness with contentment that can say of Christ's ordinances, "his fruit was sweet unto my taste." Think you, is there much energetic activity manifested amongst us in the use of the divinely-appointed ordinances of grace? Is there a strong, vehement desire to imbibe the pure spirit of the Word? Is not the all-important cry, the paramount inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" drowned and stifled by the clamorous request, "What shall I eat, and what shall I drink, and wherewithal shall I be clothed?" Are we not cumbered about many things, forgetful that one thing is needful; are we not making the world our portion, and refusing to have lot or part with Christ? are we not starving in this wilderness, content with the husks which the swine are eating; with no desire to eat of the fruit of the tree of life, and to taste of the pleasures which are at God's right hand?

Brethren! think you there is much diligent searching of the Scriptures among you? Are they regularly,

carefully, prayerfully studied by you in your perusal of them? Is there any approximation to obedience of the Divine command to seek for heavenly wisdom "as for hidden treasures?" Are you daily examining them with intense and intensifying interest, turning leaf over leaf, eagerly peering to discover every internate iota of what is "the mind and the will of Christ?" watching with avidity every spark of Divine illumination, which may serve "as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path?" Does the Bible lie open before you, and are you ever and anon repairing to it, as the Law and the Testimony by whose unerring standard you are regulating your walk, directing your conduct, and ordering your conversation? If so, then we have this tangible proof that we are not "standing here all the day idle," viz.: that this earnest search after Divine truth manifests the industry of your spiritual husbandry, and that the work in which you are engaged is giving to your hungry souls the relish and enjoyment of your spiritual food, as expressed in the language of the Psalmist, How sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth." "Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart." "Oh! how I love Thy law! it is my meditation all the day." "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether; more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than

much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb."

Brethren! does this description find a corroborative response from your bye-past experience? Think and reflect for a moment. What proportion of your time in the days and the years that are gone has been allotted by you to salvation work; or, in other words, what, and how much has been the improvement which you have made of the means or ordinances of grace? What and how far have you attained in the perfecting of holiness, in the fear of God? What, in short, has been your progress in Divine life? What the minimum or maximum of your personal religious experience? for you know as well as I do that before "the stature of the fulness of Christ" is attained, the measure varies—for we are told that there are "babes in Christ" as well as perfect men. Now, mark you, the question we are putting to you is—"What is your stature, according to the result of your measurement?"

What! Men and Brethren! is it possible that there are any here who know nothing of "growth in grace," who are utterly ignorant of the quickenings of conviction, the turnings and windings, the stumblings and stoppages, the stretching forward and "the reaching forth," and "the pressing on," in the process of conversion; the partial glimpses of reconciliation; the brightenings of hope; the gradual enlargement of prospects; heart peace verging to soul joy, as faith waxes valiant in fight; the world sinking steadily and surely down to its native nothingness; eternity with its glories becoming more lovely and more luminous, nearness, not "distance, lending enchantment to the view?"

What! Men and Brethren! does the language sound strange to any of you? Am I speaking in an unknown tongue? Am I describing the fanciful scenes of a spiritual fiction? No! verily, No! I have been appealing to events and facts, that may not be recorded in the perishing registers of this dissolving world, but which are enrolled in the archives of Heaven's chancery, sealed with the seal of Him who is to be the Judge of the quick and the dead! What! Men and Brethren! what, destined immortals! have you been so long in this world, and yet have known nothing of these feelings of the mind—these emotions of the soul—these affections of the heart? Where have you been? What have you been doing? Asleep! Sleeping and enjoying your rest; dozing unconsciously; taking your ease in Zion; when your slumbers were broken, crying, "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep." What! oh what have you been doing? Nothing! Is it possible? Nothing more and nothing less but "Standing here all the day idle." Where all this time have been your Bibles? What use have you been making of them? Lying beside you unopened and unread, or handled like a Papist counting his beads, At a throne of grace surely you never can have been, at least never in spirit and in truth, for had you been engaged in prayerful communion with God, you never would have been strangers to those emotions of the Spirit, those conflicts of the soul, those aspirations of the heart now condescended upon. To you, then, with a solemn emphasis, we address the question of our text, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?"

2. What, I remark, as another proof of spiritual

idleness, is the little desire on the part of many after the heavenly rest? Job tells us, "A servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and a hireling looketh for the reward of his work," and so it is, Brethren, that many, if they were not idle, would be more desirous to enter upon that rest which remains for the people of God. "They care not for the heavenly rest, because they trouble not themselves with the work meet for heaven." It was an observation alike just and true that was once made by an eminent Minister of the Church of Scotland, that many "only desire heaven because they care not to go to hell." Nothing, Brethren, can be clearer than this, that if there is any object on which the affections of your heart are supremely fixed, no work and no labour, however hard or irksome, will be grudged in securing its possession. And so it is, if the men around us were equally in truth desirous to obtain an inheritance in the Heavenly Canaan, they would give no rest to their eyes and no slumber to their eyelids until they had assured themselves that their title was unquestionable, perfect, and complete. And the reason why they are "standing here all the day idle" is that they have no longing desire to be absent from the flesh and present with the Lord; they have toiled early and late; they have struggled, and sweated, and striven to heap up riches here, but have neglected to lay up treasures yonder. Their heart is not there. Oh! how intently the active Christian looks up to Heaven and longs for an entrance there. Yes, my Brethren, it is a fact, and a striking one too, that grace and glory are inseparable, as has been well said, "Grace is glory begun, and glory is grace completed; grace is the

seed, glory is the crop, and in proportion to the seed will be certainly the harvest; for what a man soweth that shall he also reap." What a powerful motive is this for active exertion, for abounding yet more and more in the work of the Lord. All the grace we are acquiring in this world is an accumulation going on for the next. This is laying up treasures in Heaven, growing rich towards God, and becoming affluent for eternity. The working Christian is aiming at some high exalted post in the kingdom of God, and for a station of double honour in the realms of immortality. The working Christian, with regard to grace, is the same as the miser with respect to money, he has never enough of it, he is ever and ever longing and desiring for more, and the cravings of his new high-born nature are only completely satisfied when, in the bright and lovely land of his Father and Redeemer, he is seated under the shadow of the Tree of Life, and by the fountain of Living Waters.

3. I have further to observe, that spiritual poverty and destitution is a proof of spiritual idleness.

I must, however, at the outset, give a modified qualification to this averment. I must caution you that there may be an apparent display of great religious zeal and activity; much running to and fro; no inconsiderable bustle, and seemingly a large amount of business transacted and heavy work despatched with celerity, and yet all this zeal turning out to be "a zeal without knowledge." All this activity utterly profitless. This running to and fro nothing else but beating the air. All this bustle of business and this despatch of haste as valueless as the vapoury bubbles of a baseless speculation. You have seen the

man who, to use an expressive phrase often in the mouths of the public, has "many irons in the fire." You have seen him active, bustling, fagging, plodding morning, noon, and night—carrying on with impetuous vigour a large, wide-extended business with heavy bill transactions, and enormous sums of money passing through his hands, when, suddenly, there occurs a stagnation in mercantile currency; a commercial crisis followed by a crash; and, when the dust has been cleared from the ruins of his prostrate schemes, there is he, poor and penniless, in the veritable condition he was when he reared the gossamer fabric of his airy dreams and hollow delusions. He opened with nothing, and he winds up and closes with the same weighty balance.

What I desire to press upon your attention is, that there may be great religious excitement, and that generally diffused, and, notwithstanding, a lamentable lack of individual piety and personal godliness may exist at the same time, and that in no inconsiderable measure, just as we have shewn you there may be much overtrading and commercial commotion unsustained by corresponding capital, or supported by corroborative credit. For, let me frankly tell you, there may be an abundant profusion of spiritual pretension and religious profession—fast-days and communion seasons scrupulously observed—and coexistent therewith a miserable penury of spiritual principle and living faith. What I mean to assert is this—that there may be, nay, I go a step further, for I boldly aver that there is in the present day throughout the Church, a co-operative, or, if I may term it, a corporate energy and activity in the cause of religion

which does not find a corresponding response in the inner personal life and movements of the individuals composing that corporation. I here fearlessly assert it, as my solemn conviction, not hastily but most deliberately formed, that there is a strong tide of opinion setting in, to substitute ostentatious religious zeal for fervent personal piety, high-toned ceremonies, gorgeous observances, inflated rituals, and pompous forms for heavenly humility, Godly simplicity, Christian sincerity, and spiritual worship. To quote the language of an eminent American divine: "The increasing demand of the great Christian public is for *excitement*, for something that will produce strong feeling, and gratify an over-craving curiosity. Like the Athenians and strangers that were there, how many would apparently be glad to spend their time in nothing else, but either to tell or hear something new. Hence the religious dissipation of large towns and quiet rural parishes; the eagerness of enquiry after new preachers, and the running from one place of worship to another for the mere gratification of a vain curiousity. To sit, as our fathers of the last century sat, Sabbath after Sabbath under sound doctrinal discussion, and to see the sand hour-glass turned before the improvement of the sermon. Who could now endure it?" I believe, my brethren, that the excitement of the passions, rather than the elevation of the soul to God and the cultivation of the heart, seems to be the religion of a great many of the present day—for thus writes an English dissenting clergyman, a man in his generation pre-eminent for his personal piety, with ministeriai gifts and graces of no ordinary nature, blessed and honoured above most in winning

souls to Jesus,—thus writes he of the crowded and deeply affected audiences that hang in breathless silence upon the popular preachers in the Church, the chapel, the meeting-house, and fancy themselves so powerfully impressed by the discourses of their favourite minister. How few, comparatively, are found *spending their hours in the closet, plying the work of mortification of sin, promoting the spirit of charity, communing with God and rising on the wings of faith and hope to the contemplation of eternity.*

The prevailing religion is too much a religion of mere opinions and forms and ceremonies. "There is in this day far too much blowing of trumpets; too much display; too much parade and ostentation; too much noise and bustle; too much 'Come and see my zeal for the Lord;' too much individual and congregational vanity, and too much forbidden incense and strange fire in the censers of those who minister at the altar."

Brethren, there is no lack of energy and activity as regards the promotion of public religious improvement, but how many are "Standing here all the day idle" as regards private personal reformation, and of this we have painful proof in the numerous *individual* cases of spiritual poverty and destitution—oh! yes, the Church of Laodicea has not a few representatives amongst us who, with wonderful self-complacency, say, "I am rich and increased with goods and have need for nothing, and know not that they are wretched and miserable, and poor and blind and naked." To such we say, "abandon your refuges of lies; descend from your chief-seats in the synagogue; arise from your couches of indolence; tear to tatters your ostenta-

tious phylacteries; hush your pharisaical prattlings in the corners of the street; cast from you the leaven of hypocrisy; scatter to the winds the gaudy trappings of spiritual pride and pomp and circumstance; and speed on to Calvary's cross, and bending in unfeigned humility, cry—"Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief."

AMEN.

CALEB'S REPORT.

"And Caleb said—'Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it.'"—*Numbers xiii. 30.*

The circumstances under which these words were delivered were the following:—The Israelities, labouring under a spirit of unbelief, wished to have a regular report of the nature of the land of Canaan before they should enter it to take possession; accordingly they importuned Moses to send individuals to spy the country. At the command of God, Moses complied with their request, and sent a man from each tribe to make the necessary inquiries and observations. These messengers returned with a most favourable and flattering account of the richness and productiveness of the soil—in every respect verifying the declaration of God, that it was a land "flowing with milk and honey"; but they added that the inhabitants were too powerful for them to cope with, and too mighty and too numerous for them ever to overcome: "We be not able," said they, "to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we." Amid the confusion and alarm which this startling intelligence had produced, Caleb, one of the spies, stood forward, firm and undaunted, and made this valiant and magnanimous proposal—"Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it."

Caleb presented a splendid example of moral heroism The whole of Israel are perplexed and affrighted, but

this messenger, though he had witnessed all the dangers, and seen the gigantic enemies against whom they must contend, yet he is fearless and intrepid. The mighty men of Anak, the mustering armies of the Amalekite and the Hittite and the Jebusite and the Canaanite appal him not; he remembers that Jehovah is the King and the Leader of Israel, that He rescued them from the power of Pharoah, and smote Amalek in the valley of Rephidim, and that He is stronger far than all that can be against them. With his spirit nerved by this valiant faith, he stands forward in the presence of his countrymen, undismayed by their clamour and indignant at their fears, and gives them the round and salutary counsel contained in the text—"Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it." This was a moment of deep interest to Israel; had they complied with Caleb's advice, had they been actuated by his spirit, they would have entered Canaan, victorious and triumphant; but on account of their rejection of that advice, on account of their grievous murmurings and unbelief, they were compelled to wander forty years in the wilderness, and none of that generation save Caleb and Joshua were destined to enter the Land of Promise.

The character and conduct of Caleb is descriptive of that of genuine Christians. Their language with reference to the Spiritual Canaan is—"Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it."

We have many reports of the difficulties and dangers that infest the way that leads to the Heavenly land; we hear of the multitude of cunning and persevering and powerful enemies, but the language and resolution

of the believer is under all circumstances the same as that of Caleb.

The subject, for the purpose of illustration, may be thus divided :—1st, there is a resolution—"Let us go up at once." 2nd, the object of this resolution—"And possess it." 3rd, the motive which leads to this resolution—"We are well able to overcome it."

I. The resolution of the Christian—"Let us go up at once."

There is nothing more easy or more simple than to profess Christianity. In present times a man has to make no sacrifices, to encounter no difficulties, to suffer no privations when he casts in his lot with the disciples of Christ. The loss is on the other side, for if he has not the name to lose, he runs the risk of losing his reputation and influence among men. A man, by the very force of public opinion, is almost compelled to be a Christian; a profession of Christianity is now absolutely necessary to one's respectability. There is no difficulty in professing Christianity; if there be any difficulty in the matter at all, the difficulty is for a man to live in the world without being induced to join some sect or section of the Church visible. In making a profession of attachment to Christ there are many ready to employ the language of Caleb—"Let us go up at once," but we fear that, in practising the duties and fulfilling the precepts of Christianity, the number is not so great who would in the spirit of Caleb say—"Let us go up at once."

Though there are no difficulties to be surmounted in making a profession of Christianity, yet in being a Christian in truth and in deed there are many obstacles to be overcome, there are many sacrifices to be

made, there are many objects to be relinquished. Notwithstanding all these difficulties and obstacles, the resolution of every genuine Christian is the same as that of Caleb.

These emphatic words remind us that in entering on the Christian course there must be no delay. There are many ready and willing to adopt the resolution of Caleb with the exception of one single, solitary word. Nearly all are prepared to say—"Let us go up"; but they are not all resolved to go up *at once.* This is the emphatic word in the resolution; it tells us that there must be "no halting betwixt two opinions," there must be no parleying with the world, no base compromises with sin or Satan, no putting off from day to day and from year to year, no unnecessary and dangerous delays—but the resolution must be executed *at once.* "*Now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation."

Oh! we fear multitudes think not of the important and emphatic expression, *at once.* You will find many individuals desirous of possessing an inheritance in the spiritual Canaan, but continually from time to time delaying the use of the means required for the attainment of such an object. Ask the young and the gay and the giddy if they are willing to go up and possess the heavenly country, and they will readily answer in the affirmative; but now they cannot go up, for they must enjoy the pleasures, they must share in the amusements of the world, they must enter the haunts of mirth and merriment and be joyful with the glad, they must give vent to the overflowing feelings of youthful vivacity, they imagine there is time enough in store for making preparation for eternity, they think

it a pity to throw a damper over the ardour of incipient youth and darken their light imaginings by the gloomy and lowering shadows of the grave. Entertaining sanguine hopes of the future, they fondly conceive that when the day-dreams of youth are vanished they will have ample time to prepare for meeting their God at a seat of judgment. When fears startle them, as fears will sometimes do, they soothe their mind and they lull their conscience by the false assurance that they are willing to go up, while they are only like the Israelites in the time of Caleb, willing to go up if there are no sacrifices to be made, no dangers to be met with, no enemies to be encountered; if they are to enjoy their pleasures and amusements, they are willing to go up in their native character—"earthly, sensual, devilish."

The youth of present times are deeply chargeable with the sin of delaying to enter on the Christian course, not of refusing to make a Christian profession, for that they readily do to gain the esteem of men, and advance their interests in the world; but they are guilty of neglecting the solemn and all-important inquiry—"What must I do to be saved?" Were I to analyse the mind of the generality of our youth, I would find it thus, and for the truth and justice and strict accuracy of the analysis I boldly and fearlessly appeal to the consciences of many now hearing me.

Where are the predominant emotions and feelings of the youthful heart? It is natural for us, say they, to be joyful, to engage in those pleasures and amusements which the world by general consent has declared to be fitting for the season of youth. I do not see why at present I should abandon these innocent pursuits

and be making my soul's salvation the predominating concern of my life ; my conduct on the whole is exemplary. And if there are any deviations from the strict rules of morality and decorum, these are to be attributed to the warmth of the affections, to the excess and ardour of the passions common to youth. Were I to be religious, I must recede from my present companions, I must relinquish my present pursuits, I must change a number of my habits. I know well that I am not what I should be, but, when I have advanced in years, when I have attained greater steadiness of character, more prudence of conduct, then I shall be all that the most serious can wish. I desire to go to heaven when I leave this earth, and I am sure I am guilty of no grievous crime that can exclude me from God's mercy. In future I shall do what I can to make my calling and election sure. The future comes, but there is still the same indecision, the same procrastination, the same fearful and revolting apathy ; there is no evidence of the genuine spirit of Caleb, so strikingly developed in these admirable words—"Let us go up at once."

But it is not only among young professors that we discover symptoms of procrastination and indifference as to the objects of eternity ; it is discernible in all ranks and grades of the visible Church. Like as the Israelites were alarmed at the appearance of the children of Anak, so many stumble at the very threshold of Christianity when their eye rests on the significant inscription—"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" ; this is a barrier which deters many from entering. Their hearts have so many idols to which they pay a

profound and devoted homage, and these they cannot abandon, they will not mortify the lusts of the flesh and the lust of the eye, they cannot do away with the airy and baseless notions engendered by the pride of life. Their love of carnal ease and enjoyment deters them from entering on the arduous labours of the Christian Campaign — its numerous struggles — its mighty perils—its heavy privations affright the craven spirit of the worldling. Like as the Israelites trembled when they heard of the Amalekites and the Jebusites and the Canaanites that infested the land, so do many fear to enter on the Christian course when they survey the mighty enemies they have to encounter—the world, the devil, and the flesh. They would far rather wander in the wilderness than enjoy the blessedness of Canaan. Among the men of middle-age, those who are in the very vigour of their life, in the hey-day of their strength, we discover a backwardness and unwillingness to adopt Caleb's resolution. They have so many objects engrossing their attention, so many desires to be satisfied, so many points to be attained, that they are indefinitely postponing a consideration of the interests of the soul, they are trusting to some convenient season which the future will afford.

I would impress upon the minds of the youths hearing me the necessity of following the council of Caleb—"Let us go up at once." Let no earthly object prevent you from putting in execution such a resolution—your destiny as an immortal being depends upon it. Let not the jeers of ungodly companions, let not their scoffing remarks deter you, let not the temptations of this passing world, let not the fleeting pleasures of this unsatisfying scene prevent you from looking for-

ward to a better, even a heavenly country. Lose sight of time and keep your eye fixed on eternity, look over to its valleys that are laden with abundance, to its heights that are crested with beauty, to its vineyards clustered with grapes, and its trees waving with fruit; and like Caleb, fearing not the children of Anak, let it be your firm and unbending resolution to "go up at once."

Oh! no, it is to be feared that among the rising generation there is no firm resolve to "go up at once." There is a wish at some time to go up, but the later that period arrives so much the more agreeable to them. The present world is their delight, and they only leave it when they can no longer remain. We might expect, from the general ardour and fearlessness of the youthful mind, that splendid display of intrepid resolution and heroic valour which characterised Caleb, when alone he stood, encouraging the Israelites to go forward to the possession of Canaan. But we fear that their energies are wasted on the objects of sense, that that ardour which should be exhibited in zeal for the honour and glory of God, is dissipated in the pursuit of pleasures that are perishing. If the spirit of Caleb was widely diffused among our young professors, there would be a mighty and determined multitude animated by the faith, and uttering the words of that valiant Israelite—"Let us go up at once."

Do not imagine that they have never such a subject forced on their consideration. We appeal to the experience of some now before us, if such are not frequently the feelings, sentiments, and resolutions of their hearts. When, in some lonely and pensive hour, your mind is led to look upon the transitory nature of

this world, does not this thought sometimes arise in your breast, and is it not breathed in these words—"Well, it is time I were considering religion, it is high time I were more serious, I must now prepare for eternity, I have delayed too long?" and is there not a prayer breathed for pardon and for mercy? But when the pensive hour is succeeded by the one of bustle and of business or of gaiety and pleasure, are not these resolutions abandoned and forgotten? And why?—because the spirit that animated Caleb is awanting in them.

We will find the old, those whom the young and the middle-aged imagine should be making speedy preparation for eternity, as careless and indifferent and procrastinating as the others. Their love of the world is as strong as ever, their attachments to its objects as firm and unsubdued, and though their capabilities of enjoyments are considerably impaired, yet their desires are still keen, their appetites are still powerful. Their animal sensibilities are in a measure blunted, and so are their moral and spiritual. It is seldom, very seldom, that conversion takes place late in life, the resolution of Caleb is then seldom formed, "Let us go up at once."

Thus does the declaration convey a caution against delaying to prepare for eternity. Now is the season God has graciously given us for gaining heaven and avoiding hell; the road to Canaan is open to us, there is everything to invite, there is everything to encourage, there is everything to strengthen us,—let us then comply with the proposal of Caleb—"Let us go up at once."

The genuine Christian, like Caleb, delays not; he

girds up his loins, he trims his lamp, and goes forward with cheerfulness and alacrity. Like Caleb, he is not alarmed at the magnitude and multitude of the enemies that are preparing to oppose his advance; he knows that he is marching under the command of the Mightiest Captain that ever trode a battle plain, he is persuaded that his arm is omnipotent, that no force in earth or hell can prevail against him, and therefore he fearlessly and joyfully adopts the language of Caleb—"Let us go up at once." Like Caleb he is not dismayed though few adopt his resolutions. Of all the spies, none but Caleb and Joshua were prepared to advance against the sons of Anak; the whole camp were opposed to Caleb's counsel, but still that undaunted Israelite shrunk not from the avowal of his opinions. So, in like manner, the Christian journeys on his heavenward course though opposed by many and accompanied by few, multitudes invite him to repose by the way, a variety of schemes are adopted to arrest his progress and to induce him to sojourn in the wilderness; but proof against evil counsel, proof against the seductions of the fine flatterer and the base deceiver, proof against the mustered powers of darkness, proof against the world and proof against the devil, he adheres with unflinching firmness and with undaunted resolution to his purpose of going "up at once."

II. The object of the resolution—"let us go up at once," is to possess Canaan.

Like as the Israelites were, journeying to the promised land, so Believers are travelling to a better, even a heavenly country. The object of their highest ambition, the loftiest aspiration of their heart, their

earnest desire and persevering prayer, is to have an entrance opened up to them into that heavenly paradise where dwells thine Father and Redeemer. Heaven is the Believer's home. It is the habitation of Jehovah, and, therefore, it is longed for by him. As the spies returned from exploring Canaan, bearing on their shoulders clusters of grapes to show the fertility and richness of the country—so the Believer in the Scriptures of truth has occasional glimpses of the goodness of that land which has been promised to those who are faithful unto death. The Canaan to which the Believer is travelling is a far different country from that which Moses surveyed from the summit of Pisgah. If the Israelites were enraptured as they gazed on the waters of Jordan and caught a glimpse of the hoary cedars of Lebanon, how much more is the Believer enraptured as his eye rests on that fountain from which issue the limpid waters that flow through the streets of the New Jerusalem, as he looks on the tree of life where umbrageous foliage o'er canopies the city of the Great King. Oh! if the Israelites rejoiced when they beheld the luxuriant plains of Judah—the glorious mountains and its everlasting hills—how must the heart of the Believer be filled with ecstatic joy when he gazes on that city which has the sapphire for its man and the pearl for its gate. If the eyes of the Israelitish host was dazzled by the grandeur of Judah's landscape when the sunbeams were tinging the splendid panorama with their golden hues. Oh! how infinitely more dazzling to the eye of the Christian Pilgrim must that land be in which there is no night, but which is for ever illumed by the resplendent

glory of the Sun of Righteousness, as the heavens surpass the earth so infinitely more glorious is the Heavenly than the Earthly Canaan. It is to possess this land that the Christian adopts the resolution of Caleb: "let us go up at once."

The inhabitants of the Heavenly Canaan are not the children of Anak; the Amalikite and the Hitite, and the Jebusite, and the Canaanite—but they are the redeemed of the Lord, the general assembly of just men made perfect—the innumerable multitude who have come out of great tribulations and who are now inheriting the promise. They are not arranged in hostile bands to oppose the Christian's entrance, but they are anxiously waiting for his arrival, and are eager to welcome him with the loud anthem of praise and glory to God for his kindness and mercy.

The Canaan to which the Israelites travelled was a land flowing with milk and honey—abounding with every comfort, and necessary, and luxury—but fertile as it was—yea, the overflowing to abundance, yet it was not like the Heavenly Canaan in which there is no sorrow, no want, no pain. Oh! it had not the pleasures which are at God's right hand even for evermore; it possessed not the treasures which are innumerable for multitude and incalculable in value.

Though the Israelite crossed Jordon in safety, yet his trials, and his troubles, and his sorrows, and his afflictions were not ended. His heart still heaved the deep sigh, and from his eye there still trickled the burning tear; but, when the Believer crosses that dark Jordon which separates this world from Immanuel's Land, then every tear is wiped from his eye, every sorrow effaced from his brow, every pang

exhuled from his heart. Though the Israelite sojourned in Canaan, yet he was liable to the same infirmities, subject to the same passions, prone to the same sins as he was in the land of Egypt, or when wandering in the wilderness. He could forget God, murmur at His dispensations, disobey his commandments, be guilty of dire and grievous unbelief. Not so in the Heavenly country. The moment the Christian Pilgrim reaches that territory he is free from sin; he is holy, even as God is holy. No more unbelief annoys him; no more weakness clings to his faith; "he sees eye to eye and knows even as he is known." No darkness dims his prospects, no fears haunt his soul, no doubtings harass or dismay his spirit. He is an inhabitant of that land where mists never rose, where clouds never loomed, and where darkness never brooded; where sin never entered, where sorrow is never felt, and where separation is not known.

If we for a moment reflect on the infinite superiority of the Heavenly over the Earthly Canaan—whether as regards its pleasures and it privileges—its inhabitants and it glories, there is a most urgent, a most imperative call upon us to adopt the language and resolution of the intrepid Caleb: "let us go up at once and possess it."

III. Let us now, in the last place, consider the motive which leads to this resolution: "we are well able to overcome it."

These words were not uttered by Caleb from a presumptous confidence in his own strength or in the number and valour of the Israelites, but they were dictated by an unwavering faith in Him who had

been their God and their guide in perils of greater magnitude—who had led them through difficulties more perplexing, and against enemies more numerous and powerful. He remembered how the Almighty had smitten Egypt with plagues; had withered the influence of Israel's oppressors; had crushed the power of Pharoah and overthrown him and his horsemen in the depths of the sea. Though the children of Anak were gigantic in size, and noted for their strength and prowess, yet they were not so tall as the the pillar of cloud in which Jehovah rode, nor so impenetrable as the rock of Rephidim which yielded to the rod of Moses at the command of God. Though the Amalikites were powerful in numbers and in courage yet he remembered that the uplifted arms of Moses overcame and routed them. Caleb looked to God, he knew that they who trusted in Him would not be ashamed that if his countrymen would go forward fearing nought, but relying implicitly on the Lord and leaving the result wholly in His hands, they would be as victorious aud successful over their enemies as they had been in times past. It was faith which gave Caleb his fearlessness and valour; it was faith which enabled him, in defiance of the clamour of the whole camp, to make the magnanimous proposal: let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it."

So it is with the Believer. It is faith which enables him to accept the resolution and words of Caleb. He feels like Paul, that through Christ strengthening him, he can do all things. He knows that by the grace of God he can rise superior against every obstacle and foe, and finally be more than conquerer.

No matter what dangers interfere; no matter what enemies may approach, still the Believer, like Caleb, is undaunted. He knows, and is persuaded that God is with him and will fight for him—like Gideon, he is not dismayed at numbers, so long as he can shout the Sword of the Lord. Genuine faith nerves the spirit for every enterprise; dispels every fear and disputes every alarm. It was through faith that the worthies of old "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight and turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

The believer when in difficulty or danger looks not to himself, for then he would see naught but helplessness and weakness, but he looks to God, in whom there is everlasting strength, and therefore it is, that he eagerly adopts the resolution of Caleb: "Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it."

Brethren, what are your views and feelings on this subject. Have you adopted Caleb's resolution—"Let us go up at once," or are you still wandering in the wilderness, unwilling to set out for the promised land. Are you putting off preparing for eternity to more convenient seasons. Oh! let me warn you against procrastination, delays often are dangerous, but in religion delay is infinitely perilous. Lose not a moment in resolving to go up at once; to hesitate for a moment may be to perish for ever.

See that ye have that faith which animated Caleb; let it be your earnest prayer to God to confer that

gift upon you, so that, being united to Christ, you may be able to follow Him through good and through evil report, through peril and through fire, through life and through death, till under His safe guidance you reach that blessed land, the glories of which "eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, and of which it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive." Amid the profligacy of the profane, amid the declinsions and backsliding of professed disciples, let us adhere firmly to Caleb's proposition—"Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it."

AMEN.

DEATH OF MOSES.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses that selfsame day, saying: 'Get thee up into this mountain, Abarim, unto Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho, and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession: and die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in Mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people: because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel. Yet thou shalt see the land before thee; but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel.'"—*Deuteronomy xxxii.*

The passage which we have now read is most interesting and affecting. It gives an account of the death of a prophet than whom there has not arisen a greater in Israel. The life and conduct of Moses are calculated to excite our closest attention. The circumstances under which he stood forward the leader and law-giver of Israel, the stirring times in which he moved, the miracles he was commissioned to perform, the wisdom and prowess which he was enabled to display, the strong, lively faith which he possessed, the intimacy with which Jehovah honoured him—all these combined serve to render him one of the most interesting of Scripture characters. There is no event in the history of Moses that appears to me so calculated to rivet the deepest and most intense interest, as the fact of his death recorded in these verses.

The Israelites were now about to cross Jordan and enter the promised land—that generation which had refused to comply with the advice of Caleb were now gathered to their fathers, and their posterity was standing by Jordan's banks, on the tip-toe of expectation as to the country which was flowing with milk and honey. None, methinks, would be more anxious than he who had led them out of Egypt, who had shared every danger on the road, and braved every peril of the passage; oh! with what delight and gratitude would he plant his foot on that lovely land, the hope of possessing which had cheered him amid the insolence and ingratitude of the people, amid all the trials which he endured, and all the toil to which he was exposed. Of that vast assemblage which was encamped on the plains of Jordan all were to enter Canaan save one, and that one was their illustrious leader. The irrevocable decree of Jehovah had passed that His servant Moses should die in the land of Moab; as he received his charge for Israel on the hill of Sinai, so he must deliver it up on Mount Nebo.

In farther meditating on this interesting portion of Scripture, let me in the first place call your attention to

I. The command of God to Moses:—

"And the Lord spake unto Moses that self-same day, saying: 'Get thee up into this mountain, Abarim, unto Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho; and die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in Mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people.'"

Short, concise, and emphatic was the announcement God gave to Moses of his decease, "Get thee up and

die." The time had now come when he must close his earthly career—every circumstance attendant on his dissolution is determined. And so it is with all the children of men—one may die on the field, another on his bed, another on a foreign shore; the death of the one may be sudden, that of the other lingering; but the circumstances connected with each are predetermined in the councils of Eternity. As an old divine says—"Though we hear it not vocally, yet God hath called every man by his name, and saith, 'Die thou there.'"

It is a solemn thing to die, to pass from this into another untried state of existence. The spirit naturally recoils from dissolution, and is startled by a thought of the grave. Death is more or less terrible according to the circumstances under which it takes place. It seems to me that it is somewhat stripped of its terrors when we are surrounded by those we love; though they may be weeping around us, and occasionally averting their head to conceal or stifle the convulsive sob, yet our spirit is soothed by their sympathies, our heart is cheered by their prayers, and our hopes brighten as they speak to us of the better land; at that trying hour the feebleness of humanity is such that it needs their fleshly aids. Contemplate for a moment the idea of meeting death in some deep valley or on some dark mountain, far from all human companionship, no one near to weep over you, no voice to speak comfort, no hand to close your eyes or compose your limbs—from such a death every heart must recoil, and from every breast there is breathed the almost involuntary prayer—"Oh! let not my latter end be like this!"

Yet such were the circumstances under which Moses had to die. He was commanded to ascend Mount Nebo, and alone to struggle with the last enemy. Never do I witness the faith of Moses so sorely tried, and yet so finely triumphant as when obeying the command—"Get thee up and die." "His eye was not dim nor his natural force abated"; in all his vigour and strength he is summoned to lay down his commission. What must have been his feelings when he received this command from God? I can imagine his emotions to have been similar to these—"What, must I die while my physical and intellectual strength is unimpaired, must I alone, without one solitary attendant, ascend that lofty mountain, and on its wild and lonely summit must I grapple with the king of terrors? and when this body is untenanted by the spirit, must it lie to be preyed on by the beasts of the forest and the fowls of the air; must these bones, unburied, bleach in the sun for many a long year and day?" Oft, methinks, would his mind revolve the question—"What kind of death shall I die, in what form shall I meet the grim messenger?" One would suppose that feelings and emotions akin to these would have agitated the breast of Israel's leader; but no! strong in the faith of his God, he receives the intimation with calm resignation; fearless and intrepid he takes his staff and journeys to his grave. I follow Moses with feelings of wonder and admiration as he conducts the retreat of Israel from the land of Egypt; I gaze with awe when with uplifted rod he drives back the beating billows of the Red Sea; I look in terror and alarm when I behold him ascending Sinai's smoking cliffs amid the flashing lightning and the roaring thunder

and the pealing trumpet; and there is a fearful magnificence in that scene, when, stationed in the cleft of the rock, and covered by the hand of Jehovah as He passes by, to screen him from the insupportable brightness of His person, he is permitted to behold the glory of the Almighty as it vanished in the distance. But when I follow him as he climbs Mount Nebo to go and die, I am breathless with amazement at the unruffled tranquillity of his mind, and the gigantic vastness of his faith. As an elegant writer says—"The great trial of faith was not in the waving or striking with a rod which had often shewn its mastery over nature; neither was it in the ascending a mountain from which he expected to return with fit laws for the government of a turbulent multitude. It was the laying down of the miraculous rod which required vast faith, and the splendid courage was shown in the climbing a summit, where, with the rock for his couch and the broad heavens for his roof, and far from all human companionship, he was to submit himself to the sentence—'Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.'"

One would think that it would require far less resolution to meet death in the open field, amid contending armies, than on a solitary wild, tenanted by nought better than the eagle that was nestled in the beetling crags, or the beast of the forest when prowling for its prey; one would imagine that it would be easier to encounter the last enemy on the scaffold, or the stake, though it were amid the tortures of unfeeling persecutors and the jeers of ungodly multitudes, than to meet him amid the fearful loneliness and breathlessness of Pisgah. I know not in what

language to describe the sublime grandeur of Moses' faith. God says to him, "Go up and die"; he hears and he obeys; he takes his rod, and commences the ascent of the mountain. Let us follow him with the mingled feelings of admiration and of awe. Beneath is Israel, ready to enter the land of promise; above him is his death-bed, and his grave. Ere he goes to resign his spirit into the hands of his Creator, I can imagine him turning round to cast a fond glance upon his countrymen and kindred, and as he took a long and lingering look of the Israelitish camp, he would call to mind the perils through which he had passed, the mercies which he had received, the fidelity of God's promises; and as he wiped the trickling tear that bade the last farewell, he would resume his journey, breathing a prayer of faith and thankfulness to Him who had rescued them from the land of Egypt and from the house of bondage. The mysteriousness arising from the nature of his death, the loneliness and desolateness of the scene where it was to take place—these appal him not; the faith which enabled him to abandon Egypt's palace sustains his spirit in this dark hour of terror and of trial.

But here we must pause and consider, in the second place, the reason of the command which God gave Moses to go up and die. "Because ye trespassed against Me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, because ye sanctified Me not in the midst of the children of Israel." The circumstances of the death of Moses and Aaron were somewhat similar. When God announces to Moses his dissolution, he tells him he must die on Mount Nebo, as his brother Aaron did on Mount Hor.

The crime on account of which they were prevented from entering the land of Caanan was the sin of unbelief. The circumstances of their transgression are related in the book of Numbers. Israel murmured for water. God bade Moses summon the congregation together, and in their presence speak to the rock, that water may come forth. Moses, irritated at the conduct of his countrymen and distrustful of God, over-reached his commission, Instead of striking the rock with his *voice*, he struck it with his *rod*. It is the only sin recorded against Moses since the time he left Egypt, and for that single act of transgression he is debarred from ever entering the land of promise. It was to punish him for that act of unbelief that God issued the command, "Go up and die." The Almighty, in His infinite mercy, does not keep him in ignorance of the nature and extent of his offence. While He inflicts the penalty, he informs him of the crime. "Because ye trespassed against Me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified Me not in the midst of the children of Israel."

Death was to Moses at one and the same time an entrance into glory and a punishment for his sin. Though he had given numerous proofs of his faith in God, of his love for His glory and honour; though he had performed many and signal services in forwarding His cause; yet, for one act of distrust, he must be gathered to his fathers. As I gaze on Moses ascending Mount Pisgah to resign his spirit into the hands of his Creator, I am struck—I am fearfully and forcibly struck—with the greatness of that sin which the Bible terms unbelief. I see Moses arrested on the

very borders of Canaan, and prevented from entering that land—the thought of which had animated his spirit while living amid Egyptian luxury and basking in princely splendour, which had cheered his despondency when, in the days of his obscurity, he was herding Jethro's flocks in the land of Midian. I see one illustrious for his faith, pre-eminent above all others for the meekness and placidity of his temper, distinguished above every prophet by signal marks of Jehovah's high regard; I see this famous servant of God, notwithstanding his prayers and entreaties, punished for one solitary act of unbelief. As I gaze on a spectacle so astounding—on a retribution so awful and so striking—I insensibly exclaim with the Apostle Peter, "If the righteous scarcely are saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear." Here I have a most convincing reply to the weak argument brandished by some, that one sin will not condemn them, that a single offence will not provoke the wrath of God. Here must that fearful illusion be dissipated, in which millions are buried—that a small sin, that a venial transgression, will not be visited with the fearful vengeance and righteous indignation of Jehovah. Were we to estimate Moses's sin by the standard of human judgment, then we would say it was a small sin—a venial offence. In striking, instead of speaking, to the rock, we would make allowance for the heat of the moment, for the great provocation he had sustained at the hands of his countrymen. We could see much to palliate his offence; but it is God that judges and not man, and in the punishment inflicted upon Moses we have the most striking evidence that Jehovah will not look upon sin without abhorrence.

It is a question put by an eminent divine, and I would press it closely, earnestly, solemnly, on your attention. "If Moses must die the first death for one fault, how shall they escape the second who sin always?" This is a question which may well hurry you to your knees in fear and trembling, to cry out with the Publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and with the Jailor of Philippi, "What must I do to be saved?" Am I not addressing some who are chargeable with unbelief, who, though they have witnessed the judgments of God, though they are aware He has punishments in store for every unbeliever, yet continue unconvinced and unconverted. Warning after warning has been given you, exhortation upon exhortation has been addressed to you to cease to do evil and learn to do well. You have been invited to repose all your confidence in God; but you have leant upon the world; you have made its transitory objects the props of your strength; and have despised Him who is the chief corner-stone, tried and precious. If God would not allow His faithful servant Moses to enter Canaan because on one occasion he had distrusted His word, how can ye expect ever to gain Heaven, who have despised every counsel of God, rejected every offer of His mercy, and who are continuing in a state of wickedness the most frightful and revolting.

Are there any here, who, vexed with the harassing cares of the world, bowed down under its troubles and afflictions, are inclined to murmur at the dispensations of His Providence, and distrust the gracious promises of His word. To such of you as are indulging these feelings we would say, "Beware! Remember that if God punished Moses for want of faith, he will not

spare you if you commit a similar sin." It matters not how eminent the sanctity of any believer may be, how sterling his piety and unblemished his principles, it matters not though during all his life he never committed more than one sin, yet for that one sin God will visit him with chastisements, and not even a whole life of abstinence from transgression could wipe out that one offence. God's law is all perfect, and cannot be broken with impunity in one point—no matter how small, or how minute, or how insignificant it may appear to us, its requirements are infinite, and no mortal can fulfil them.

In the punishment inflicted by God upon His servant Moses we have set before us in the most striking light that God is no respector of persons. In what befell Moses the Israelites were taught that God would hold no one guiltless who should contravene His orders or distrust His word, and we have a most impressive lesson read us—that unbelief persisted in, that sin unrepented of and unpardoned, will present an insuperable barrier to our entering upon that glorious and heavenly rest which remains for the people of God.

Let us then, my brethren, carefully examine our hearts, and see whether there is lurking in our breasts any noxious principle of unbelief. Let us avoid everything that savours of distrust. Let us always remember that whatever befalls us is permitted by the Sovereign Dispenser of all events, who metes out righteous judgments. Let us guard against murmuring under His dispensations, or grieving His Spirit. Be it our endeavour to sanctify Him in all things, and trusting to the aids of His Holy Spirit, let our exclamation be, "Lord, we believe, help Thou our unbelief."

The sin which Moses was guilty of was an aggravated one. In striking instead of speaking to the rock he was guilty of disobedience. He fulfilled not God's command, "Speak ye unto the rock before their eyes, and it shall give forth his water." He was chargeable with over-reaching his commission, and this arose from distrust or unbelief. He struck when he should have spoken; but more, he struck twice; and, in the end, he was stricken by God for it. He was guilty of doing violence to the integrity and beauty of one of the types. The rock typified Christ, and in smiting it Moses was chargeable with the commission of an act which tends to throw a cloud over the whole Gospel scheme. The rock was to be smitten only once, as it typified Christ, who "by *one* offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Our Saviour was smitten by the rod of the law, but only once; and, when we are in want of spiritual water, our rock is not to be smitten, but spoken to in the voice of prayer, and then there will issue their pure and living waters, which are for the healing of the nations. Such was the complicated nature of the sin for which Moses was punished. "It is a most dangerous thing in divine matters to go beyond our warrant." Owing to his disobedience and distrust he was prevented from entering Canaan. It was on this account that God addressed the command to him, "Go up and die."

Though he was not permitted to enter Canaan, yet he was allowed to view it at a distance, which brings us to consider, in the third place, the privilege granted Moses. "Yet thou shalt see the land before thee, but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel."

The command God gave to Moses was to ascend Mount Pisgah and die, but previous to his dissolution he was to have a view of that land which God had promised as a possession to the Israelites. We have already followed Moses to the summit of the mountain, we have stated the reason for such a journey, and we are now to consider the glorious privilege allowed him ere he resigns his commission as the leader and the lawgiver of Israel. Of what passed on the mountain we have nothing further than this — that the Lord miraculously assisted his vision, and showed him "all the land of Gilead unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah unto the utmost sea and the south, and the plain of the Valley of Jericho—the city of palm trees, unto Zoar." He had no doubt most ample evidence of the richness and fertility of the soil, as well as of the fidelity of Him who had promised Israel this possession; but what most of all had delighted the eye and ravished the heart of Israel's leader must have been the fact that he was gazing on that land which was to be the scene of Emmanuel's trial and triumph. It was not the lovely palm-trees that were waving in the distance; it was not the glorious hills that were crested with beauty; it was not the spacious fields that were laden with abundance; it was not the odours that were wafted by the passing breeze from the vineyards and gardens of Judah; but what of all enraptured the eye and entranced the soul of the departing prophet was the spot where Divinity was to be cradled; was the garden where the Saviour was to be in an agony, was "the goodly mount," where the tremendous feat of man's redemption was to be achieved.

I can imagine his attention wound up to the utmost pitch of excitement as the hand of Divinity directed his eye to Bethlehem and Gethsemane and Calvary, and as the Spirit unfolded to him the deeds that were to be transacted there. As He revealed the future intentions of Jehovah, I can conceive the Prophet's spirit completely nerved for encountering the king of terrors, inasmuch as his faith was already changed into sight. Divinity, having made these revelations to His servant, stands aside and allows death to attack him. What could be more encouraging to Moses in his encounter with the grim messenger than the presence of his God? No mortal eye is gazing upon him as he struggles and grapples with the last enemy; no human voice is near to whisper peace and comfort; no sound may break in his ear but his own dissolving nature, or the scream of the eagle that is fluttering above him, greedily waiting for his carcase. Afar from all human sympathy and human aid he is encountering the king of terrors, but around and about him are Jehovah and his ministering spirits, supporting the strength and invigorating the spiritual energies of the Prophet. The loneliness and desolateness of Pisgah is enlivened by the presence of the Lord, and when the struggle of dissolution is subsided, the spirit of Israel's illustrious lawgiver is conducted by attending angels to that bright and glorious land, of which Canaan was but a faint and feeble type. While the spirit of Moses is attended to, his body is also cared for. He that watched over his birth, preserved him in the ark of bulrushes, guided him through the wilderness, supported him on Pisgah in the hour of desolation: that same being takes charge of his burial.

We find that God buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor, "but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." No fowl of the air, no beast of the forest, feasted on his body. No mortal knows who dug the Prophet's grave. No train of mourners followed his remains to the tomb. No human voice chanted the requiem. No tear was dropped on his bier. The angels of heaven closed the Prophet's eyes, and prepared his sepulchre, and over his resting-place Jehovah has thrown the impenetrable mantle of mystery.

But that body which was hid in the valley of Moab appeared all glorious on the mountain of Tabor. We find Moses on the mount of transfiguration "conversing with our Saviour concerning the decease he was to accomplish at Jerusalem." Moses's body was evidently kept for this purpose, as in like manner Elijah was translated for the same object. On Mount Tabor Moses appeared as the representative of the Law, Elijah as the representative of the Prophets, to declare that the Christ was the end of the Law as well as of the Prophecy. "Prophecy finds in Him its fulfilment, for He is the substance of all the shadows. The Law ceases from all its judgments, threatenings, and condemnations as *it* finds *the sinners* in Christ."

In the re-appearance of Moses we have abundant proof of the resurrection of the body. Here may the believer learn "that, when Christ appears, he shall appear with Him in glory."

From the subject which we have been considering, three things may be drawn—1st. An exhortation; 2nd. A caution; 3rd. An encouragement.

1st—An exhortation. We exhort you, Brethren, to

acquire a portion of that faith which animated the breast of Moses, when, with a resolution undaunted and a spirit undismayed, he ascended Mount Nebo in obedience to the startling and thrilling command, "Get thee up and die." When God calls on you to execute any duty, no matter how irksome,—to encounter any danger, no matter how alarming,—be ye resolute in the strength of God, and go up to the work before you with a steady hand and a courageous heart. And when you shall grapple with the last foe—as grapple you must one day or other—see that you have the unswerving faith of Moses to meet him without affright, let the circumstances attending his approach be ever so terrible and alarming.

2nd—Let me caution you against distrust. It was on account of that sin that Moses was denied an entrance into the land of Canaan. There is nothing that offends God more than any approach to infidelity. See that ye ever repose with unwavering confidence in all His great and precious promises, remembering that "he who is faithful unto the death will receive a crown of life."

3rd—Let me direct your thoughts to the encouragement that may be drawn from these verses. As Moses had his dying pillow smoothed by the bright and brilliant prospect of Canaan, so will the heart of the believer, amid the agonies of dissolving nature, be cheered by a comforting view of that better land to which he is hastening. As the spirit of the Prophet was sustained by the presence of his God amid the dreariness and desolateness of Pisgah's summit, so will the Saviour be around the dying bed of every genuine disciple to strengthen him in his struggle, to support

his soul when encompassed by the terrors of death, and to guide his steps as he treads the dark chambers of the grave. Oh! what is it that gives the believer that intrepidity of mind which enables him to exclaim, "Oh, death, where is thy sting; Oh, grave, where is thy victory." Oh! what is it that cheers the gloom of the chamber of death, that enables the dying man to rejoice amid the pains of dissolution, amid the sobbings of affectionate relatives, and the severing asunder of close and tender ties? Oh! what is it save the strengthening and enlivening presence of Him who robbed death of its sting and spoiled the grave of its triumph.

As Jehovah and His attending angels surrounded the dying bed of Moses, so in like manner does the Saviour and His ministering spirits encompass the believer while struggling in the agonies of death. No matter though he be expiring in the quiet and peaceful chamber, or in the roaring flood; no matter though he be in the deep valley or in the dark mountain; on the battle plain or the tenantless wilderness—still, wherever he is, there is his Redeemer with His unnumbered hosts, waiting to conduct his spirit to where Israel's illustrious Prophet dwells in grandeur and glory.

AMEN.

THE END.